

Reconfiguring Academic Knowledge: transforming learning through regenring the student essay

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I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own original work.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Word Count 79,896

For my dad

Abstract

This thesis, which is located in the current socio-political context of British university study, investigates how genres act on the production and communication of academic knowledge. It explores the work of a group of first year undergraduates from a range of disciplines including social anthropology, economics, religious studies, linguistics and politics. The data consists of pairs of written assignments; a conventional essay and a version of that essay reproduced with a different genre. Emerging from the analysis a new theorisation of genre which views it as a semiotic resource used in the process of communicating meaning is proposed, drawing on the work of Kress (e.g. 2003) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (e.g. 2001). In contrast to other genre discussions, which consider what genres look like, as in structuralist approaches or the purposes they serve, as in functional approaches, this study is concerned with the affordances of genres; that is what genres allow in the production of texts. It identifies four orientations of genres; contextual orientation and discursive orientation which are associated with social aspects of production; thematic orientation and semiotic orientation which are associated with material aspects of production. Through this theoretical lens, the study demonstrates how different genres orient texts and their producers towards different ways of understanding and expressing meaning. The findings present a challenge to the convention of the essay as the dominant genre in university education and suggest that through working also with other genres students can experience and develop their learning in a variety of ways.

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Preface

'Well I wrote the essay in the special collections room whereas I wrote the re-write at home. You know, when I did the Swahili one it was a proper essay – you know you felt you needed to be in the library surrounded by books whereas this one [an alternative genre] was more an exercise in just - it wasn't so much having to reproduce facts and saying the right thing to get the marks, it was more of an exercise in doing it the way you wanted to.'

(Peter – a first year undergraduate student)

As illustrated by the above comment, the writing of a piece of work does not take place in an empty space hermetically sealed from the surrounding environment. For that writer, certain environments suited what he felt to be different types of writing – in this case (a 'proper essay' reproducing 'facts and saying the right things') located in the university library contrasted with the 're-write' (a task where students were invited to reproduce a formal essay in a genre of their choice) located at home. This comment, which was part of a longer discussion with the student, was striking because it came 'out of the blue' and was not something I had considered in connection with writing, although I sometimes discuss it with students in connection with reading. It made me think about what the environment does, how it shapes our experience and how it leaves traces of itself in our work. The environment is, of course, a complex thing where the physical, the spatial, the cultural, the temporal, the biological, the historical and so on combine to create what we might call the context.

I want to introduce my thesis with two examples of communicative experience which in many ways pre-empt my discussions. In this way, I hope to foreground the idea that communication is a complex social practice involving a multitude of different social and material elements. The environment, as illustrated above is one such element – not just the local environment of the piece of work itself – what's 'on the page' or what's 'on the screen', but also what's round and about these locations. If I'm going to talk about communication and writing and the making of knowledge, which I am, then perhaps it is possible to suggest that the environment plays its own part in the process of making/representing meanings. It could be argued here that the only influence is on the writer and not on the reader in terms of the making of the messages, and that may well be so. However, sometimes traces of the environment also find their way into the reader's space too. What I mean here is that environmental elements may frame understandings in some way.

Of course, my thesis is not about the environment but is about how 'work', and specifically university student work, is and can be produced and read. And perhaps it is from the point of view of the 'reader' that this discussion should begin.

Reading as Re-creation

I want to look at reading as an act of re-creation – a remaking of what has been produced. I want to do this because I need to explain where I'm coming from and why I feel that the role of the reader and the role of the writer, to re-use Eco's title, are worth thinking about. This is particularly relevant here as my research seeks to explore the ways in which knowledge

is both shaped and made with the resources used in its production and the social circumstances in which they are made.

The examples of my own reading experience below help to illustrate the subjective nature of reading and interpretation and its counterpart, writing. The first took place some years ago; the second, more recently.

Example One

The picture here is a mother's day card produced by my son when he was around 5 years old. I offer this here as it represents a moment in my own realisation of the subjective nature of meaning and exemplifies how we make and remake meanings from our own personal standpoint.

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



For several years (he is now 17) I had it up on my office wall along with various other drawings and photos. Throughout all that time I had interpreted the relationship between the two people depicted to be as follows: The figure on the left – the smaller of the two – is my son, while the figure on the right – the larger – is me. From the sizing and the positioning of the two figures, the arm coming down over the shoulder of the smaller figure and the arm reaching up to the larger figure are all redolent of the child-parent relationship. Both figures are wearing what overtly seem to be similar clothes – trousers and long-sleeved tops. There is nothing of particular note in this –or at least hadn't been until some time ago when my son came into work with me. He noticed the picture and remembered doing it and then he proceeded to explain it.

“That's you there, mum” pointing to the diminutive figure on the left – “see you're wearing your glasses”. And, of course there I am depicted in my glasses. And, of course, the whole thing turned around. Now I can see other clues to the intended reading – I'm wearing jeans – notice the tighter cut – while my son is wearing the baggier tracksuit bottoms he always wore.

My son's relevance/centrality is represented through size as well as many other elements – colour, expression, and of course the dynamic of the 'hugging' relationship – reversed from the parent's (me) point of view.

Example Two

The following illustration comes from a book (Hypertext by Ilana Snyder) which I borrowed from my university library.

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



I saw this page with its yellow post-it note – its writings and drawings – its traces of other readers. But in this case, not just a commentary on the text itself – the underlining of ‘important’ bits, the note in the margin. Here is an interaction beyond the text. And finding this in the book, I choose to scan it, to paste it in - link it to my own preoccupations. What we have is a visiblised case of intertextuality – a represented interchange / intervention / subversion which transforms even my own reading of the text. I cannot read this page without the influence of this other environment that predated my own reading. This then leads to other notions of reader writer interface, the inter- (or hyper-) textuality of other texts.

How many people are involved here? One? Two? More? Who is the ‘reader’ commenting on the content – making a note – taking note? Who is the

illustrator – graffiti author? I have seen this character engraved in biro on classroom desks. Who were these people? Where were they when this new text was made? Were they sitting side by side at a library desk ‘Red Pen’ was the reader of the book – for sure – ‘Black Pen’ is subverting the environment The black ink overwrites the red. – Are the interactions synchronous? What has happened between them to lead to the exchange? Is the insult directed at Red Pen or someone else? Is it really an insult or just some friendly banter? Was ‘Black Pen’ a later borrower of the book responding to something beyond the pages on the pages? Is the ‘fuck-you’ directed at the author of the book or someone else? Who is the illustrator? The graffiti author? Is it the reader of the book or someone else? And what was s/he responding to at that moment?

Unlike the ‘mother’s day card’ above, I can never know the answers to these questions. But the speculative thoughts that my encounter with this note evoked transformed the way in which I read Snyder’s text. It took me outside the content and made me return to earlier thoughts I’d had when considering the traces of other readers so often found in library texts; how their ‘readings’ disrupt our own.

These three stories exemplify how I work. Things catch my eye and I collect them waiting for the chance to share them, to say ‘Look what I’ve found. Isn’t it wonderful’. In fact, this thesis grew out of such a desire. The work I discuss here, the work that a small group of students produced, needs to be shared.

Because I have been involved in this kind of work for nearly all of my working life which is a considerable amount of time, there have been many different pathways that I could have gone along in writing the thesis. I have

brought in examples from my own working experience to illustrate the many issues that I raise in this discussion. However, it has been impossible to go along every path – to do so would have meant that this particular work would never have been finished. I apologise if at times it seems that I start a story only to pull back, but this is due to the desire to share my many experiences working with students and working with texts.

Chapter One - Introduction

'...I felt like I was just quoting various people and then sort of paraphrasing in between and I felt it very frustrating...' (Andy)

1.1. A sense of frustration

The above comment was made by a first year undergraduate student reflecting on the essay writing experience. He was talking about what he perceived as the requirement to 'regurgitate' what he had been reading and his assumption that his reader, the tutor, would have read the same thing hundreds of times before. This sense of frustration stems from what could be considered an almost ritualised practice: namely the conventional way in which students are expected to engage with the disciplinary content; the essay. For this student, essay writing was seen as a reproduction of already known information, a display of predetermined 'knowledge' or as Bourdieu and Passeron (1994 trans. p.14) put it 'the practice of an *ars combinatoria* of the second degree and at second hand'.

I start my discussion with this report of frustration as it seems to encapsulate the difficulty of the student experience, particularly in relation to essay writing, where they are expected to 'master a body of facts or ideas' through 'accumulating knowledge on a particular topic by reading the relevant literature, and then presenting what [they] have found in [their] own terms and in [their] own way.'¹ This kind of advice, while well meaning in itself,

¹ This is a paraphrased extract from an undergraduate subject area handbook at the university where the students in my study were working. See Chapter Two for further discussion.

serves inevitably to cause consternation amongst students, particularly when they are less than familiar with the practice of writing as a student in a university in the UK.² The phrasing of this advice, in its attempt to lay out in 'explicit' and 'transparent' terms manages to confound the situation by the very nature of the expectations outlined. The phrase 'body of facts or ideas' conveys an impression of a fixed amount of stuff which has to be not only learned, but controlled or governed ('mastered') even from the first essay in the first term of the degree. More curious is the suggestion that students can present this 'mastered body of knowledge' any way they like ('in your own terms and in your own way'), which all students know to be contrary to the facts, particularly when the advice is contextualised as 'essay writing'. It is, then no wonder that students become frustrated.

Of course, students can easily find out what an essay *looks* like and learn very quickly that this process of presenting in your own terms and your own way is limited to particular kinds of terms (academic, disciplinary) and particular kinds of ways (essay genre). However, even when they do get to grips with these procedures, they then feel caught up in what seems to them a kind of ritual where they 'regurgitate' information which is already known to those who are reading their work 'in the way they want you to', as one of my student informants put it to me, enacting 'the mechanical reiteration of ideas presumed dear to his professor' (Bourdieu and Passeron, *ibid*). This presumption of doing it 'the way they want you to', however, is also part of the ritual as it assumes that 'they' know and can explain exactly what 'they' want. I will develop this idea further in Chapter Two. But the point is that students are not usually (ever?) asked how *they* want to write 'it', their

² See Sally Mitchell, 1994, *The Teaching and Learning of Argument in Sixth Forms and Higher Education*, University of Hull for substantial discussion on the transitional experiences between school and university.

understanding, their 'mastering' of the 'body of knowledge'. And even if they were simply asked, what would they choose to do?

1.2. Writing (and reading) as situated interaction

In most academic environments students demonstrate what they understand about their subject mainly through writing and sometimes through oral presentation.³ In fact, the tasks assigned to students reflect the modes (writing and speaking) in which disciplinary knowledge tends to be presented in the professional arena. However, there is a marked difference in the circumstances in which the professionals produce and those in which their students produce. These differences concern what I want to call 'the social' and they lead to differences in the kinds of material choices available in the production of work, most specifically that of genre. For example, a professional academic writes an *article* whereas a student writes an *essay*. The professional gives a *lecture* while the student gives a *presentation*. The different naming of these communicative practices reflects the different socio-political and cultural circumstances in which they occur and this in turn is reflected in the way in which the text is designed, produced and distributed, to use Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) terms. Who designs the product, who produces it and how and within what circumstances it is distributed, influences how it is made and how it is received. Ultimately the student is not writing as a writer in the sense that the reader/setter might write, (for a 'real' 'public' 'peer' readership) but within the certain constrained context (institutional and formative) where the producer must write to 'please' or 'satisfy' the setter. 'She/he positions him [the student],

³ although certain disciplines such as art and design, music and dance, include also different modes and media to reflect the nature of the knowledge.

not as a writer with a responsibility to inform his reader, but as a student who has to perform a certain writing task in order to be assessed' (Ivanic, 1992:146).

How we 'read' texts, as much as how we 'write' them, is always a matter of subjectivity. Once they are out in the world they are open to be read in a multiplicity of ways depending on the reader's interests and perspectives and the environments in which they are read. The interpretations, the readings are also influenced by what could be considered environmental factors. For example, a world event may have happened which makes certain aspects more salient than even the author intended or even realised. Watching the film *JFK* recently, for instance, in the environment where we have another war, changed the way I 'read' the film compared to the previous time I watched it. The moments in which a writer writes comes and goes. No matter what we do to control our meanings, the reader will always remake it.

The relationships between the participants and the interactions that take place around the textual practice all contribute to its meaning potential. The texts in my preface, for instance, exist within particular frames. The 'mother and child' picture sits in the frame of 'mothers' day' and within that frame it is fulfilling a particular discourse function. The discourse is understood within certain cultural contexts and presents messages of love, family, closeness and so on. The library book pages sit within a different frame – a library text with its public readership, an academic text where certain types of reading are anticipated. In this case the post-it note serves to disrupt and gives the new reader the choice either to absorb the disruption and make it part of the 'reading' or reject it – ignore it and remove the note. Other texts have other discourses and contexts for interpretation, but just as with the

examples above, those interpretations are always going to be subjective – influenced by the individual reader's own expectations of the discourse and its textual representation and the circumstances under which it is read.

Student essays also sit within their own frame – pedagogic, disciplinary and institutional. In the pedagogic sense, some key markers are the compulsion to write essays and the attendant penalties if they do not, the assessment involved in the interactions between lecturer and student, both formative and summative, the proving that learning has taken place (or not) and what kind of learning and so on. In the disciplinary sense there is the adopting the preoccupations of the discipline, the learning how to talk like a member of the disciplinary community whether one wants to or not and the recognition of what sorts of things are deemed relevant, valued or important (i.e. the disciplinary discourse). And institutionally there are issues of procedures – aims and outcomes, how things are done round there, how the hierarchies work. On top of this are all the other frames in which the students write, their personal goals and desires, their histories and experiences, their situations. All these and countless other factors (Are they happy? Do they have a full-time job? Have they got children to care for? Have they got a headache?) in which a particular student writes⁴ a particular essay and indeed in which a particular tutor reads it.

An essay is, therefore, as are all literacy practices, situated (see e.g. Barton et al, 2000). In other words, it occurs within a frame – part of not separated from all the other things that go on around it – as discussed in the previous paragraph and as will be seen in the student work that I discuss in this thesis.

⁴ In my student texts there are examples of current life entering into the writing e.g. a recent burglary in the case of one, the media preoccupation with 'asylum seekers' in the case of another.

1.3. Making better students?

The work that I consider was produced by a group of first year undergraduate students at The School of Oriental and African Studies⁵ in the University of London. They had chosen to take a new course, 'Language Power and Ideologies', that I had been given the opportunity to develop in juxtaposition to the other courses I was responsible for: English for Academic Purposes, 'study skills' and other learning 'support' programmes. Unlike the other courses in my remit, this one was incorporated into the mainstream first year undergraduate scheme and offered as a 'floater', a course that any student from any discipline could choose. The unit was validated in the normal way, albeit rather late in the academic year, and was somewhat belatedly added to the list of first year options during the opening week of the academic year in which it was to run.

Institutionally, the unit was located in the realm of 'academic skills development' with the hope that it would improve students' understanding of 'how to write essays' and 'how to read critically'. In other words, the institutional space was 'given'⁶ to me on the understanding that this course would make 'better' students of those who participated. The course, then, stood outside the usual business of the institution, both because it focused on practice⁷ rather than product and because it did not have anything specific to do with the specialisms that comprised the activities of the School. It was marginal as indeed was my own institutional position – or better - 'liminal' as

⁵ This small institution is part of the University of London. It has approximately 3,000 students and specialises in the study of languages, cultures, societies and laws of Asia and Africa.

⁶ I had, for years, been working with international students and later students with dyslexia, developing and delivering groups courses, individual tuition and overarching 'introductions to...' sessions in the institution.

⁷ Maybe this could be considered as 'trivium' work - following Bernstein's discussions (1996)

both the course and I operated *between* the institutional boundaries of disciplines, of status and of activity.

For my part, I seized the opportunity with relish as I felt it could help in the battle to improve the status for the work and workers in my department⁸ all of whom were 'classified' as academic *related* employees and not *academic*⁹. Swales (1990), arguing for a shift in attitudes towards this field, problematises the status of workers in what are institutionally considered 'remedial' activities in which 'we have nothing to teach but that which should have been learnt before' (p.2). And Turner argues for 'making [academic literacy] a more powerful force within the institutional discourse of academe' [...] in order to redress its marginalisation.' (1999:151). One way out of my 'ivory ghetto' (Swales, 1990:11) was through designing a 'real' undergraduate unit which had visible 'currency' in the collection of undergraduate credits and despite its 'liminal' position, the course was an opportunity to institutionally reclassify the work so that it would no longer be viewed as servicing the 'real work' that took place in the academic departments, but as 'real work' in its own right. I would be teaching *with* and *through* and *about* my own discipline rather than 'merely' with and through, which was more typical of my other institutional work.

The course was also situated squarely in the context of debate on 'academicism' versus 'operational competence' (Barnett, 1997:25) and the question of generic 'bolt-on' versus integrated (embedded) programmes (see e.g. Hodginson, 1996, NCIHE, 1997, Barnett, 2000). My institution had been

⁸ Actually it was called a 'unit' as the term 'department' was exclusively for the use of institutionally recognised 'disciplines'

⁹ In the UK an 'academic (or 'other') related' terms of employment are substantively different to 'academic' terms of employment - for instance, research time allocation is excluded from the 'related' categories.

developing its learning and teaching strategy – a required activity following on from Dearing (1997) and a process in which I myself had participated in my capacity as 'head' of the English Language Unit, later to be renamed the 'Learning and Teaching Unit' in at least a nominal recognition that our work was concerned with more than 'just' English and, perhaps more pragmatically, that there would be a group explicitly identified with learning and teaching issues.

Before going any further it is necessary to clarify, at least a little, the politics surrounding skills, English language and academic support. I have already made reference to the marginalisation of this kind of work and have cited discussions by Swales (1990) and Turner (1999). However, it is also important also to consider some of the different ways in which this kind of work is conceived and realised.

The debate surrounding learning and teaching in Higher Education has been raging for some twenty years or more commensurate with the 'marketisation' of university education. The rise in the numbers of international students forced universities to establish what were originally conceived of as English language teaching units to respond to the real needs of students arriving from diverse backgrounds. Workers in these units began to realise that the 'problems' were not 'just' to do with English language competence, but more importantly they were to do with very different conceptions of academic learning. These differences were most visible through student writing (see e.g. Jones et al. 1999). Equally, 'widening participation' and the massification of higher education with financial penalties and rewards linked to 'performance' meant that teaching had to become more prominent as a practice than hitherto. This realisation was promoted by numerous studies, reports and actions the most influential of which has been the Dearing

Report (1997). Even so the status of teaching still lags far behind the status of research and the relationship between these two practices is a contentious and hotly debated issue (e.g. Hattie & Marsh, 2004, Elton, 2001) particularly since university funding is involved. Subsumed into this debate is the link that has been made between learning and teaching and what is known as 'skills', a shift which is most clearly illustrated by the change in name of the government department now known as the Department for Education and Skills.¹⁰

Much has been written on the subject (e.g. Bernstein, 2000 and Barnett, 2000) analysing and challenging competency and performance ideologies which over simplify the situation, and reinforce the trend towards marketisation of knowledge itself. Led by the 'market' characterised as 'employers' and promoted by government, skills have to some extent been prioritised over (disciplinary) knowledge and are itemised and classified into separate micro skills (see NCIHE 1997 for descriptors). Nestling among these skills sets are, academic skills, which is where my own course was located as mentioned.

Parker (2003) argues that a 'skills' orientation fails to recognise the complexities of learning and of disciplinary knowledge itself while Lillis (2001 p.33) in her discussion on student writing in the context of 'widening participation', offers a critical evaluation of the different camps in this debate. She argues that:

official discourse on the 'problem' of student academic writing in higher education ignores much recent thinking on language and literacy generally and research on student writing more specifically.

¹⁰ It has been interesting to chart the changes in name of this department in connection to changing ideological agendas: Department for Education and Science, Department for Education and Employment, Department for Education and Skills.

In broad terms, the dominant official approach is to frame student writing as a skill, drawing implicitly on notions of language as transparent and of both language and user as independent of each other, and of context.

Her work proposes 'an alternative perspective [which] can be described as that of writing as social practice'. (Lillis, 2001 p.33).

A strong contributor to the 'recent thinking' which Lillis refers to is the work of Lea and Street in 'academic literacies'¹¹. Their work considers student writing (and reading) from a practices approach which 'takes account of the cultural and contextual component of writing and reading practices' (Lea and Street, 1998:158). The work, which emerges from 'New Literacy Studies' (e.g. Street, 1984, Barton, 1994, Gee, 1996), considers three models of student writing which they have identified through discussion with students, tutors and analysis of student work: a study skills model which takes a student deficit perspective and focuses on atomised surface features of student performance, an 'academic socialisation' model where students are inducted into the new (academic) culture through a process of orientation to the different tasks that they will encounter and an academic literacies model which incorporates the other two into 'a more encompassing understanding of the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations and identities' (1998:158). In other words, student writing takes place within a dynamic social context which is far from homogeneous, as implied by an academic socialisation approach. Moreover, the work that students do

¹¹ Of course, it is worth also mentioning that despite the 'academic literacies' name, student writing, viewed as practice, involves other modes of communication - most notably talk. See, for instance, Lillis, 2001, Ivanic, 1998, Clarke, 1992 for examples of how talk and writing interact.

cannot be understood through the lens of 'how to' as in 'how to write an essay' inherent in a study skills approach.

My own view is that academic success is about understanding, not only the information, but also the ways in which academic knowledge is produced and presented. It is about epistemologies, about the ways in which the different participants are both positioned and position themselves. It is about how language is used to make the messages mean, the linguistic choices the producer makes and how those choices interface between the information, the informant and the informee, not in a unidirectional way but rather a dynamic cycle of communication (see Chapter Three for further discussion).

So 'making good students', means inviting them to be more explicitly aware of the processes involved in the design, the production and the distribution (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) of texts so that they become more familiar with how the texts they read and write in their various disciplinary fields work on textual, ideational and interpersonal (Halliday, e.g., 1985) levels. This, of course, does not happen in a vacuum, but within the context of other learning experiences across the institution including the subject specialism of my own course – that is – language in its widest interpretation. The critical evaluative perspective I refer to can serve to enhance students' interactions with their own disciplinary and other interests.

Whether this work should be undertaken outside or within the disciplines is a relevant question. After all, disciplinary knowledge, its discourses and its practices are culturally 'determined'. They have been and are being made by the disciplinary practitioners themselves within their own disciplinary communities. Therefore, it might be argued that learning how to write or

produce in a discipline might best be done in that discipline. However, it doesn't have to be an either/or situation.¹² Students need to learn that there is something to learn apart from 'the body of knowledge' of the discipline. In this sense then, my course did deal in transferability, but the kind of transferability that occurs whenever we get new knowledge and new ways of looking at things. All academic or 'mental' learning is transferable. In the case of my course, it was learning about how language works, thinking about the social, political and cultural contexts in which communications occur and considering the relevance of this in the students' own situations both academic and otherwise.

With this in mind, I hoped that the course would provide students with the opportunity to explore different communicative practices through considering different communicative events. I wanted to introduce students to the notion that texts are made and remade through the processes of communicative interactions. I wanted them to analyse how different 'texts' are made, including academic texts, and to encourage them to explore the ideologies and agendas behind textual productions as represented through different semiotic resources. And inevitably, since the 'content' of my unit was the means of production for the students' other (disciplinary?) content, what they learned on the Language Power and Ideologies course would, I thought, be transferable to their other courses. Equally, what they learned on the other courses would be transferable to mine.

¹² See also the work of Sally Mitchell and Alan Evison (Queen Mary University, London) who have developed a programme for lecturers called 'Writing in the Disciplines' to encourage disciplinary teachers to understand the importance of writing as learning rather than simply as assessment.

1.4 The students and the course

The course attracted students¹³ from a range of disciplinary fields within the confines of the institution which is essentially social sciences and humanities. These were: Arabic linguistics, economics, religious studies, anthropology, African studies and politics. They reported¹⁴ a variety of reasons for choosing this course: because it sounded interesting,

I was interested in the way people in general use language and methods of communication to impose - reflect ideas ... (Dan)

because they wanted to help with academic tasks,

Didn't have any real idea but except that it would probably help me reading texts and different texts – we'd work with variety of texts and images and develop some critical methods. (Anya)

and some because the course was the only thing available that didn't clash with other courses,

I didn't know anything about it until about the second week when all the things I'd wanted to do all clashed and so I started asking people in my class what they did 'cos I thought that obviously they were going to do something that doesn't clash and asked Saskia and she said come and try it out. So I came to that lesson and tried it out and stayed. (Peter)

¹³ I have allocated different names to the students to ensure anonymity, though all of them were more than happy to be named.

¹⁴ The comments interwoven throughout the thesis come from recorded interviews I had with the students as a follow-up to the course unit and the assignments which comprise the main data for this study. See section 1.5 for further clarification.

None really knew what to expect, and indeed, as it was the first time for the course to run, neither did I. In some senses the course developed organically, although, of course, I had decided on the themes to include and was able to provide them with an overview. (See Appendix 1.1 for course outline)

The course was unlike others that the students were taking in that it dealt explicitly with what could be considered the *means* of production rather than product itself, although, of course, product, the disciplinary 'body of knowledge' (e.g. theories of language, linguistic concepts etc.) was also a necessary inclusion and the means of production are also an inherent part of all academic courses. It is just that in our case the subject matter *was* the means of production.

The students themselves indicated that there was a different kind of atmosphere in the group resulting from the crucially interactive nature of the course. Also, perhaps, because it didn't follow the more conventional lecture/seminar format that they were experiencing elsewhere.

I think we were more of a group than teacher students – and just taking notes. I mean everybody's ideas were valid and it was a nice way to study
I think (Nat)

Such comments are, of course, very gratifying, but reflect, perhaps the fact that my own experience as a teacher was as a teacher rather than a lecturer and that much of what I teach is about practice. In this sense there is bound to be a kind of reflexive quality to the way in which such a course would enact.

None of the students appeared to be 'marginal' in the sense that they might experience fundamental difficulties in dealing with academic study. But many revealed in later interview that they had worries about their studies, indicating the degree of anxiety students of all backgrounds have when undertaking a degree. In fact, most were getting high grades in their other coursework, suggesting that they should have had nothing to worry about. Perhaps, also, because the kind of work we engaged in was linked specifically to what was going on at the time in the world, in the students' lives and in their academic lives, it allowed them to make connections between the ways texts are made and the impact they have. They were learning to 'read' texts critically, and explicitly so, using 'tools' informed by critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 2001) and social semiotics (e.g. Hodge and Kress, 1988). In this course we did not consider language as a 'transparent medium' through which meanings are conveyed, a view strongly challenged by Turner (1999) for instance. On the contrary, we viewed language as constructing meaning, language as knowledge, as system and as behaviour (Halliday, 1978).

For the final assignment (of two) I wanted to give the students the opportunity to experiment with some of the concepts we had been exploring, particularly associated with the idea of different genres and different modes of production. This work entailed rewriting, in a genre of their choice, an essay already produced for one of their other units. We had discussed, earlier in the course, the notion of genre and in particular, the student essay, in contrast to published articles. We had also examined two 'subversions' of

the respective genres – a spoof article¹⁵ and an assignment written for an art and design course led by John Wood at Goldsmith's College, London produced as a children's story.

In our discussions we had considered, in the case of the former, the role of disciplinary (academic) convention in the 'acceptability' of the spoof article where the 'form' (discourse, conventions and format) served to disguise the implausibility of the content. Referring to the latter, we had considered how the academic knowledge had been reflected through the medium of the alternative genre, a children's fictional story. The idea of comparing these two productions was to explore some of the issues surrounding the relationship between 'content' and 'production' and the positioning of students, their knowledge and that of the disciplinary field.

At the time, I was not entirely sure of what I was trying to achieve or how it might impact on the students' own understandings of what we had been talking about. Nevertheless, I felt that it would be an interesting project – playful certainly – but also could provide an opportunity to reinterpret some of the things they had been studying elsewhere. In that sense, they would have to reflect on their other learning and link what we had been considering to what they had been studying elsewhere. I also wanted to see how and whether they would feel differently about their subject, about their own position as writers and about their sense of empowerment.

I had given them the instruction to include the same references to works cited in their original essays and asked them to deal with the topic in a way

¹⁵ Oleg McNoleg, 1996, 'The Integration of GIS, Remote Survey Expert Systems and Adaptive Co-Krigging for Environmental Habitat Modeling of the Highland Haggis Using Object-Oriented Fuzzy Logic and Neural Network Techniques', *Computers and Geosciences*, Vol. 22:5 pp585-588, Elsevier

which reflected the original essay question and content. My rubric was as follows:

Take an essay that you have already written from one of your other units and rewrite it for a different reader. In other words, reproduce it as a different genre. You could, for instance, write it as a story, a newspaper article or even in play form with dialogue. Think about the conventions surrounding academic writing and take count of how you will ensure that the piece is properly referenced etc.

When you submit the assignment, please make sure you include also a copy of the original essay.

What the students actually produced¹⁶ far exceeded any expectations I might have had regarding the nature of their work. Genres chosen included a newspaper report, a play, a radio phone-in and a children's' expository 'article'. All were exceptional in their own ways, faithful in themes and topics to the original essay versions but substantially different in how that information was (re)worked. Most importantly this work raised questions about the effect of the new genres on the 'old' knowledge that had been represented in the original essays. What had this exercise in redesign allowed to happen that hadn't happened in the essays themselves? What opportunities had the 'regenring'¹⁷ offered the students regarding *what* they could write and *how* they could write it? And how did the students themselves make use of the opportunity to really 'write in their own terms

¹⁶ See Appendices 4.1 – 4.6 for full texts and Chapter Four for summaries

¹⁷ I want to use this term, despite it not being an established 'word' as I feel it valuable in expressing what my students actually did. The process involved a *conscious* process of shifting ideas and information from one genre to another and involved, I will argue in later chapters, a process of 'transduction' (Kress, 2003) resulting in transformations in writers' agency, meanings and experiences.

and in their own way' as suggested, albeit with a different idea in mind, in the departmental study guide mentioned above?

Analysis of the texts and interviews with the students reveals that when these student writers were given the opportunity to write their knowledge in genres other than the conventional academic essay it affected what they paid attention to, how they articulated their ideas and how they positioned themselves as 'knowers'. In the course of my discussion, I will be focusing on how the regenring allowed the student writers to 'recontextualise' (Bernstein, 2000) the work of the original essays thereby enabling a shift in agency. I will explore how the availability of new semiotic resources afforded (Gibson, 1979) by the new genres allowed the students to bring new perspectives to the work that were not available to them through the conventional essay. In particular I will explore the 'visiblising' of practice and experience which tends to become erased from finished academic products (see e.g. Bourdieu, 2004 or Gilbert & Mulkay, 1989) and the 'vitalising' of disciplinary debate made available through genre shift.

1.5 From Practice to Research: evolving a methodology

As an assessor, in my capacity as course tutor, I could see that these productions were successful and effective. But it seemed to me that there was much more going on in the process than could be seen with the 'naked eye'. My previous experience as researcher on a large-scale project into language across the school curriculum (Gorman et al., 1990) had demonstrated the impacts of genre and language 'performance', which I

might now gloss as 'contextual expertise', on the attitudes of educational assessors towards student productions. In that study we worked towards developing frameworks for analysing those texts, both spoken and written, based on the initial assessments made by teachers involved in the surveys. My present aim was similar in that I wanted to reveal what effect the regenring had had on the work and why it had made such a strongly positive impact on me as reader-assessor.

1.5.1 The Data

Having made some initial comparisons and begun to see the different effects the regenring seemed to have had on the students' understanding of the essay topics, I decided to talk to them to find out more about their experience in doing the work. I used the opportunity for 'course unit review' to initiate the feedback process by distributing the institutional feedback form (Appendix 1.2) which I swiftly followed up with a request for further feedback on the students' assignment choices. This could be undertaken either with written e-mailed responses or face to face discussion (See Appendix 1.3). This approach gave the students time to focus their ideas and proved a useful frame for the subsequent interviews. In total, five students came along for interview; four who had done the regenring assignment (Anya, Andy, Peter and Dan) plus one other (Nat) who had chosen a different task but who had wanted to participate in the process by giving direct feedback on his experience of the course unit. Saskia provided written feedback, and although I have since been in contact with her and have discussed her work, it was not under 'research' conditions nor was it recorded; hence I have not referred to it here. Apart from the initial course unit feedback, I did not hear back from Assif, though I have subsequently been in general e-mail contact with him though time lag makes it difficult to draw on this.

The interviews themselves took a semi-structured approach, working from the themes represented in my precursory questionnaire and the informality that this facilitated suited both my familiarity with the informants and my intention to encourage an open and wide ranging discussion. I hoped that this approach might provide the kinds of insight I was looking for with respect to the motivations and experiences of the students in choosing and doing the assignment itself¹⁸. Interviews, as Hammersley (2006) points out serve:

as a source of witness accounts about settings and events in the social world, that the ethnographer may or may not have been able to observe her or himself; and as supplying evidence about informants' general perspectives or attitudes' (ibid, p.9).

In my case, the discussions generated by the interviews more than fulfilled this desire. They provided extremely perceptive insights into the students' experiences of writing both conventionally and differently through the regenerating. Their comments also confirmed many of the things that I could see from my analysis of the texts themselves, in relation to the different ways in which they felt able to articulate the material and, indeed, their sense of confidence and ownership. Furthermore, the interviews enabled me to include the students more visibly in this study, as participants themselves. In fact, I could suggest that the opportunity to make their voices visible in my work reflects the ways in which they used the 'voices' of their informants (their sources) in their own work.¹⁹

¹⁸ See Hammersley (2006) or Blommaert (forthcoming) for discussion on the uses of interviews in ethnographic work.

¹⁹ See Chapter Six for discussion of the 'Living References'

Among the many observations arising from these discussions²⁰ was that the opportunity to write 'differently' was to some extent liberating.

And I felt that by using the characters [...] I found myself free or freer to express my opinions or my ideals or my feelings towards the subject in a way that the purely conventional way of writing didn't or wouldn't allow me. (Dan)

The students were very willing to talk about the process and to admit that even though they'd enjoyed it, this didn't necessarily mean that it was all fun or even easy.

It was really fun at first but then I found it – well with an essay if you've done the reading then I mean you don't really have – you can just write it in a really flat way because it's not really what you're going to be marked on whereas with this, well because I was doing it in essay circumstances, then it was – I felt it was a real pressure (Anya).

The kind of comments that the students offered, however, made me think more closely about what my, perhaps, rather casual assignment request had led to in terms of the overall experience and the new products themselves. This is why I wanted to examine them further – as texts – to see what kinds of transformations occurred and how the 'old' information had been reconstituted into 'new' knowledge. I felt that I needed to find a way to be able to say something about their work that would facilitate a more coherent response than simply – this is good, this is very good. I wanted to be able to say something about what was going on so that I could provide a persuasive argument to justify what had clearly been a fruitful and challenging activity.

²⁰ Tapes and transcripts of these discussions are available if required

The 'regenring' exercise had undoubtedly enabled the students to bring different perspectives and develop new insights in relation to the disciplinary knowledge they were working with. My task was to reveal these through an analysis of the work itself to begin to understand what these different genres can do and whether this kind of work adds different dimensions to students' disciplinary learning.

A further aspect that began to emerge through my analysis and the discussions with the students concerns the interactions between students and lecturers and the ways in which each perceives the other. Given my work as academic literacies teacher, these issues had already been the focus of discussion with the many students I had worked with over the years. I had also worked with disciplinary lecturers as part of their own staff development and more specifically about particular students, student cohorts or teaching and learning issues. This, taken in tandem with my own change in personal circumstances, from academic literacies teacher to disciplinary lecturer, and the new identity that I myself had acquired in the eyes of my own 'subject' students, led me to realise the importance of the student lecturer relationship and how each is viewed in the eyes of the other. Therefore, I decided to interview a small group of subject lecturers in order to get what might be considered another side of the story. These interviews, which I discuss in Chapter Two, were mainly undertaken by e-mail (see Appendix 2.1), although I was also able to interview two lecturers face to face, and were a follow-up to the discussions I had had with the students and to the initial stages of my text analyses. They provided additional insights into the complexities of the student lecturer interactions and allowed some consideration of what aspects of student work is valued. It was then possible to make some connections between the aspirations of the lecturers and the sorts of things that emerged in the differently genred student productions.

In other words, these interviews helped consider the paired texts within the frame of undergraduate learning and teaching.

However, the main data for this study are the pairs of work that each student produced, the original essay and the regenerated version. The theoretical underpinning and analytical framework that I devised are discussed in Chapters Three and Four and detailed analysis of the work is presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

1.5.2 Practitioner Research

It is necessary, before I go any further, to say something about the methodological approach with which I have pursued this study. As already mentioned, the study arose out of the normal practice of my own teaching and the data which forms the core of my work was the outcome of a normal end of unit assignment.

Practitioner research in education has come in for some criticism (e.g. Foster, 1999) whose scathing report argues that much teacher research lacks validity, rigour and relevance to anything outside the immediate context in which it was undertaken. However, as Bartlett and Burton, in their defence of teacher research, point out, the premise on which Foster and others base their criticism is problematic and offers a false dichotomy.

Thus whilst at face value it may be legitimate to label practitioner research as descriptions of practice rather than objectively designed research studies [...] [t]he dichotomy is false because it is these very descriptions of classroom practice which constitute the data source

for the research projects. So it is not possible to conduct practitioner research without descriptions of practice. (p. 404)

As they argue, *describing* practice is only one element of practice based research. In fact, because of the nature of education as a field of work and the need for teachers to understand why students do or don't do things, practice based research has developed a strong position in education, particularly since the late 1980s, with 'action research' (Lewin, 1948) playing a dominant role in what has come to be an integral part of teacher training and teacher development. Perhaps this is why practitioner research is sometimes viewed with scepticism; it can be considered to relate only to personal practice and be concerned only with personal professional development.

Lewin's (ibid) 'action research spiral' has provided a useful approach to exploring and interpreting practice. However, it runs the risk either of being used 'as a template for practice' (McTaggart, 1996, p. 249) rather than a means to reflect, or of being considered too parochial unable to generate statistical facts and figures, which, as Rampton et al. (2001) point out in their discussion on the impacts of applied linguistics research in English language education in the mainstream, fails to impress governments.

However, not all practitioner research is solely concerned with 'cycles of activity' as in Action Research nor is it left 'stuck' in the classrooms of the practitioners concerned, as is clearly demonstrated in the collection of articles edited by Herrington and Kendall (2005). They problematise the research – practice dichotomy, arguing that the two domains overlap (see Fig 1.2, p21) and suggest that it can be sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two.

It can be helpful to see research and practice as moving, overlapping sets with a close alignment between investigative practice and research in practice, and involving activities that may be difficult to classify or that may be both research and practice. (ibid, p20)

My own work fits within this frame of reference. It is not a formal research project driven by hypotheses to be tested, nor is it action research with an inbuilt cycle of activity to test out. Rather it is research that seeks to investigate a phenomenon that arose as a result of my practice.

It provides a theorised account of what happened in the course of my own teaching and is focussed on the events which took place within a very particular context, the course unit, involving a small group of participants, the students and myself, within a framework that I established through the pedagogical decisions I made. However, the work moves well beyond reflective description of practice and observation of a particular phenomenon, namely the student work. This was the motivation for what became the research; that is the development of a theory generating analytical framework as will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four and exemplified in subsequent chapters.

It could be argued that this kind of approach is reactive rather than proactive in that the investigation occurs as a response to the observed phenomenon. However, there is nothing wrong in that, provided, as is the present case, that the investigative response is designed to shed light on the phenomenon. In the case of my present study, the phenomenon is the work that the students produced, the regenerated productions and their counterparts, the original essays, which comprise my primary data. The interviews and the

development of my analytical framework all stem from that data in my attempt to understand and explain the phenomenon.

This approach, I suggest, typifies much research in academic literacies (e.g. Lillis, 2001, Thesen, 2001, Crème, 2005) which is not surprising since academic literacies as a field is, itself, a practice oriented epistemology (see e.g. Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis and Scott, forthcoming) and most academic literacies researchers are teachers working directly with students. Research undertaken in the field is inevitably oriented towards practice though not without a theoretical perspective. The combination of these two elements ensures that this kind of research is accessible and usable for teachers and researchers alike, not to mention students themselves. In the case of my study, the research is both theory generating (the affordances of genres) and pedagogically motivated (new practices in writing in the academy).

1.6 Research Foci

The analysis of the texts produced by the students, discussed in detail in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, began to suggest, as I have mentioned above, that something fundamental had occurred leading to transformation at both textual and production levels. In other words, the effects were textually apparent in the different articulations of the original information and the production of the texts were experientially different as suggested both in the interviews and in the texts themselves.

Of course, analysis into how texts are made is not new. The genre studies from Australia (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis 1993) bring together debates on genre as social and linguistic practice. Their work explores, for instance, the importance of genre awareness in the pedagogical literacy. Researchers such as Swales (1990) have explored how academic written texts have developed and how they reflect the different communicative practices involved in professional academic writing. Hyland (2000) has investigated the linguistic choices that typify disciplinary fields and disciplinary domains and Hunston (2000) has explored discoursal strategies in evaluation. Biber et al. (2002), have examined different 'registers' used in university settings, focussing particularly on differences between spoken and written discourses.

However, unlike the above discussions, which draw on corpus analysis to describe the linguistic forms that typify the genres or discourses²¹ they discuss, my work is more concerned with the effects of genres on their users, in this case the students, and on the meanings that their users can make. In other words, my study does not seek to draw conclusions about the features that typify language use (genres, discourses, registers) useful though that is, but rather to propose something quite different; that is what are the social and material implications of choosing one genre or another?

1.6.1 Research Question

The following question summarises my investigation as fully described above and serves as a useful reference point when considering how my discussion proceeds.

What happens in the making of knowledge and the experience of making that knowledge when students (re)produce a conventional

²¹ See Chapter Three for discussion on these two terms

essay with a different genre such as a play, a radio show or a newspaper article?

It was the desire to explore this question which led to the study and raised further questions as follows:

- What is the effect of regenring on student learning and how useful could it be as a pedagogical resource?
- To what extent does 'regenring' or writing with different genres allow students to fulfil the assessment criteria for students to be analytical, critical and creative?
- Can genres be considered as semiotic resources whereby different genres have different affordances? In other words, what are the social and material consequences of using one genre instead of another?

In the end, I hope to be able to suggest that through exploring different genres and the affordances they offer, it is possible for students to shift their position from merely reproducing, as they see it, to encouraging them to reinterpret and create and in so doing develop a more socially situated and personal understanding of the subjects they are studying.

1.7 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter Two investigates the 'communicative landscape' with particular reference to attitudes and expectations surrounding essay work. I will discuss the double function of the essay as both learning development and summative assessment and will focus particularly on the problem of communicating what we mean by a 'successful' essay. These issues will be considered against a backdrop of discourses of 'apprenticeship', of 'skills' and of the 'marketisation' of higher education with ever increasing demands for 'transparency' in assessment criteria. Drawing on interviews with students and lecturers, I will consider how the practices of essay setting and essay writing positions both tutors and students in what is often a frustrating and painful exchange. This, I suggest, results from a gap between the desires and expectations of students and tutors resulting from their different perceptions of the process itself. It is this gap, I suggest, where learning takes place.

In Chapter Three I will set out the theoretical perspectives which underlie my approach to analysing and discussing the data that forms the core of this work. I will discuss the wider theoretical context in which my ideas have gestated for so long and in particular the concept of 'genre' which is central to my overall discussion. It is a term that carries a substantial amount of history and which has acquired a variety of different interpretations. By considering the concept in relation to that of 'affordance' (Gibson, 1979) I develop a further theoretical concept, that of orientation. In this way, I hope to establish how I am using the concept of genre in this study and why it is useful in considering my data, particularly because it shifts emphasis from a discussion of what a genre *is* to what it can *do*.

Chapter Four, which develops some of the themes from the previous chapter, sets out the analytic framework with which I have studied the data and provides a clarification of my terms of reference. It also provides a description of the students' work by giving summarised accounts of the paired productions.

In the next three chapters I hope to offer a persuasive argument that different genres can bring about different possibilities of what can be talked about, how it can be talked about and 'who' the writer becomes in this process. Not all the regenred versions demonstrate all aspects; they differed according to the genre selected and the semiotic resources available as a result of the chosen genre. Chapter Five examines the concept of 'agency' in student writing and suggests that the process of 'recontextualising' (Bernstein, 2000) through regenring the original essay afforded a shift in *discursive identity*. Chapter Six focuses on the way in which the new genres led to a transformation in how the original essayist content means. In other words, it examines how regenring forces a reconfiguration of information as the result of the different semiotic resources that the different genres insist on. I suggest that there is a kind of snowball effect whereby the need for certain resources leads to a need for other resources which then combine to force a particular kind of meaning on the text itself. Chapter Seven looks at how regenring afforded students the opportunity to 'visiblise' processes and practices through which academic knowledge is made but which tend to be erased from both the conventional essay and professional academic writings (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984/2003). Here the focus is on how the regenring allowed students to articulate the experience of 'doing the work' and to reflect on the experience of 'being a student' involved in the process of 'doing the work'.

Chapter Eight considers the implications of my findings. To what extent does my discussion of the affordances of genres offer new ways of thinking about the sociocultural meanings of texts in communicative activity? How can this work inform current thinking on genre as a pedagogical resource? Is it important to rethink the ways in which we have conventionally expected students to demonstrate their learning and do we need to move away from the idea that writing in the university is entirely a summative process; a product of learning rather than a process with which learning occurs? Does writing differently, in the ways the students in this study have done, help in the learning and teaching of disciplinary knowledge and if so, how can we make space for this kind of work within the university context?

Already transformations in the educational context have taken place and they continue to do so as the teaching and learning process increasingly draws on technologies other than print media and practices involving different generic framings. The discussion that follows will show how genres orient us towards particular ways of being and particular ways of articulating our ideas using particular modes and media. It argues that by extending the repertoire of student production to include a greater diversity of genres we can give students the opportunity to experience their disciplines from different perspectives and different positions.

Chapter Two - The Communicative Landscape

Cos when I got one essay handed back [...]there was one thing that I said that I thought, well that's how I'd interpreted it - so you know, it was a bit much for him to write 'this is not the case'. (Peter)

2.1 Introduction

The comment which opens this chapter encapsulates a key problem inherent in the relationship and interactions between lecturers and students; that of who can say what, when and how. In the case above, the student had given a personal interpretation of some issue only to have this invalidated by his tutor's, albeit possibly casual, comment. Of course there is a lot of missing information here in that we do not know what student actually 'said' and how it was said, but the point is that the feedback from the tutor (this is not the case) is presented in such categorical terms as to deny any space for the student to find his own understandings. What is suggested by the feedback comment is that the student was wrong, not necessarily in the factual accuracy of what he was saying, but in his personal interpretation.

As I have suggested in Chapter One, the communicative practices in the university are complex and often frustrating for both students and teaching staff alike. I have already mentioned that the participants concerned have a multitude of social and cultural identities all of which interplay in the different interactions which take place. In this chapter I want to consider these in the context of the work that students are required to produce,

namely essay assignments. I will, therefore, explore the interactions between tutors and students with particular reference to the exchange of goods – the design, production and distribution of essays – and explore the sometimes seemingly contradictory messages that prevail.

In the course of my discussions I will be referring to debates surrounding the role of Higher Education that have been raging over the last ten years or so in the UK, particularly in relation to what Barnett (2000) describes as the 'performative slide' (p.260) where 'what counts is less what individuals know and more what individuals can do (as represented in their demonstrable 'skills') ' (p.255). These debates have bearing upon the discussion as they establish the frames in which students and lecturers are working and throw into sharp relief some of the tensions and attitudes that prevail. They raise questions about how students are perceived and how they perceive themselves. They also highlight the complexities surrounding expectations: students' expectations, lecturer's expectations, and the competing agendas of the 'national interest' most usually typified as government, employers, the business community and so on. And most relevant for my discussion, they provide the context in which assessment has come to play an increasingly important role; assessment, that is, for students, for lecturers and for universities themselves.

'Transparency' through measurable 'outcomes' is the order of the day, particularly as funding is, in HE, linked to performance in both research and teaching. And, as Barnett points out, 'In this situation of unequal power, some messages are being promoted more vigorously than others: competence rather than understanding, generic rather than specific modalities of development, individual rather than collective performance.' (1997, p.17). Furthermore, with the introduction of tuition fees, the

relationship between students and lecturers shifts. A university education has come a little bit closer to becoming viewed as a commodity as Bernstein (2000) anticipated and, perhaps, like other commodities, if you pay for it, it's supposed to 'work'. If not, well, can you take it back? British HE has certainly become a more obviously 'high stakes' culture, unlike the privileged years of the 1970s when I myself was a student without a care in the world, although this, of course, may not have been the experience of all students.

In Chapter Two, therefore, I will look first at the position undergraduate students occupy, or rather the positions they are perceived to occupy, within the university arrangement. This will consider issues surrounding the 'ownership' of knowledge and the representation of that knowledge through essay writing. I will then offer a theorisation which attempts to exemplify the interactions that take place around assignments, drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) conceptual framework of 'design, production and distribution'.

The second part of the chapter will explore the desires and expectations of the different parties involved in the production of essays and draws on interview and e-mail survey data from a small group of lecturer informants. I also refer to discussion, e-mail correspondence with students in attempting to reveal how the participants, students and lecturers, interpret the practices of the essay and how these, in turn, fit within the discourses of skills and competencies that dominate the political agendas as discussed above. By interweaving the debates with the reflections from my informants, I hope to provide an explanation about why my investigations into genres and their affordances might offer alternatives to the essay which, as Andrews (2003) points out, has become somewhat stale.

From this it can be understood that this chapter seeks to contextualise the discussion not only in the wider debates surrounding higher education but also the more personal and specific experiences of individual participants.

2.2 Constructing the Student

... you know – this is a group of young novices looking to engage in the predominant discourse of the discipline... (lecturer)

In his discussion of the 'metadiscourse options' of the textbook Hyland (2000) considers how these books (and their writers) position the student as novices through the linguistic¹ choices of their writers; for example, the inclusive 'we'. He argues that 'The texts establish clear role relationships, with the writer acting as a primary-knower in assisting novice readers towards a range of values, ideologies and practices that will enable them to interpret and employ academic knowledge in institutionally approved ways.' (p121).

So how are students perceived within the university setting? The metaphors of 'novice' or 'apprentice' are often used in describing the student in relationship to their lecturers ('expert', 'master') and to the disciplines they have chosen. Both metaphors are associated with vocation and continuity as the novice/apprentice is inducted into the world and work of the expert/master. Hyland's discussion (ibid) shows how textbooks, for instance, emphasise the distance between the knowing lecturer and the unknowing

¹ I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapters Three and Four and propose the term textual materials to encompass different modes of production.

student in, I would add, the same way that lectures and other pedagogical performances do. They establish the participants as 'teacher' and 'student' by employing a pedagogical discourse characterised by particular metadiscourse options (see also Candlin et al., 1999). These metadiscoursal strategies, combined with a display of 'institutionally approved' knowledge (Hyland, *ibid*) help to maintain the relationship.

However, unlike apprenticeships, where the master models the relevant product using a particular series or procedures² with the intention that this will be imitated, lectures and textbooks do not provide a model for students making their own student texts. Pedagogical production stands in marked contrast to the privileged discourses of genres such as journal publications and scholarly books which have a very different socio-cultural purpose than the textbook. In fact, if the student were to write as the textbook writers write, using similar metadiscoursal features, they would be positioning themselves as expert and their readers as novices, thereby disturbing the institutional relationship. I shall return to this in Chapter Five when discussing the effect of regnering on the students' authority as writers.

Of course understandably lecturers want their students to enter into the practices and knowledges that they themselves love and from this perspective the analogy of apprentice or novice may seem attractive. But for most students a university degree does not imply an academic career and students do not necessarily see themselves as becoming 'full members' of the

² Marchand's 2000 monograph, *The Lore of the Master Builder: Working with Local Materials and Local Knowledge in San'a' Yemen*, provides a highly informative discussion on the nature of traditional apprenticeships. The discussion reveals aspects of apprenticeship which are certainly appealing to the notion of the student teacher relationship in HE, but one which may only be valid for some people and to limited extent. A key factor is the unquestioning aspect of the nature of apprenticeships and the totality of the power relationship. In HE the nature of the power arrangement is different, particularly as there are degrees of redress, but also the 'unquestioning' nature of apprenticeship knowledge does not work well with the desire for critical analysis within UK HE.

academic disciplinary community. For instance, my own journey to professional academia did not begin with my BA but instead through my later professional development as a teacher.

Of course, students do need to get to know particular bodies of knowledge in order to grasp the disciplinary concerns and they are very well aware of this. In fact, this is what they expect as being the main part of the deal. However, the difficulty is in navigating the different conceptualisations of what constitutes 'valid' knowledge and 'invalid' knowledge in academia, a theme developed in the work of Lea (1999). In her discussion on 'mature'³ students' interactions around essays, she argues that university learning involves negotiating academic knowledge rather than receiving it, 'interweaving prior knowledge and ways of writing and reading texts with course requirements' (p.105). She suggests that rather than viewing everyday knowledge as totally distinct from academic knowledge (or second order knowledge, e.g. Laudrillard, 1993) 'we need to blur the distinctions' (p105) to enable a better understanding of student learning. The conflicts and frustrations, which usually remain unexpressed, often concern the issue of what kinds of knowledge are valid in academic writing and whose knowledge (and experience) is considered acceptable. And it is precisely this tension which the student cited at the beginning of this chapter was talking about.

Students know, only too well, that they inhabit a rather strange space as the following e-mail comment sent to me by a Masters student demonstrates:

³ I use this term reluctantly for want of another. What I mean by mature is students who come to study with more than school experience; for instance they are parents, they have jobs, they have done or are doing many different things apart from formal education.

A fear then comes up from deep inside of me: am I risking my 'life'? in the sense I am just doing a 'dissertation' that leads to a degree, a 'simulated' work of little practical value? Is my effort worthwhile? (John)

It is difficult for students to locate themselves. Are they 'knowers' in their own right? What status do their opinions and experiences actually have in relation to their work as student essay writers. Are they (merely) supposed to replicate or are they supposed to interpret and if they interpret something from their own perspective, will it be enough? The products made by students are student products not professional products with professional currency in the professional world of academia. The student's knowledge is situated differently to that of the lecturer, as, in turn, the lecturer's knowledge is also situated within a particular paradigm of power. The following feedback⁴, from a subject lecturer to his student about a disputed essay, illustrates how conflict can arise when there is a disruption in the conventional positionings.

'Reading it again, I feel that you almost wrote it for yourself, not for the reader; that is, that you wrote it with the assumption that the reader would have all the same references as you and would be able to draw all the inferences you saw in the material.' (e-mail extract)

In this case both parties had misjudged the relationship they were engaged in. On the one hand, the lecturer, who was correct in recognising that the student assumed certain shared understandings, had (mistakenly) positioned him as a novice. As such he expected the student to demonstrate his learning rather than allude to shared assumptions in the way professional writers

⁴ In my capacity as academic literacies tutor, the student, who was extremely affronted by the feedback, had brought the email and the essay to me for discussion.

might do when engaged in close community discussion. The student, on the other hand, had misjudged his own position (student) and assumed that he was a full (and equal) member of the disciplinary community rather than a novice displaying his learning. The student involved in the case above was extremely annoyed by the lecturer's response to his work but equally the tutor himself was in a very difficult position constrained by the expectations of what he needed student writing to be in order to assess it (display, demonstration of learning). In fact, on appeal, other (lecturer) readers received the essay very differently, reading it with a smaller power distance than the lecturer above.

Although this example differs from that offered by Lea (*ibid*) above, the issue of whose knowledge counts, how that knowledge is articulated can produce a highly charged situation particularly when formal assessment is concerned and the work is, therefore, a high stakes undertaking.

Expertise, experience, types of knowledge and ways of knowing all play their part. But behind all this is also the issue of status and power. The tutor is supposed to 'know more' as already mentioned, but sometimes the student can know too drawing on personal and professional experience learning. In Lea's example above, the case study she refers to highlights this point as the student in question struggles to balance her own experienced knowledge of gendered identity with the academic theorisations concerning that issue.

So tutors also have to find a position from which to read their students' work which is both flexible and responsive. They need to be able to adjust their personal relationship to disciplinary knowledge and temper their own reactions to what they feel have become 'clichéd' within the disciplinary community but which are newly discovered by their student writers.

... you know I get a little bit tired of, you know, Edward Said's polemical discourse on orientalism. It's important but it's been stated so many times now that it's almost an obvious – and I sometimes have to step back and remind myself that - ok it is really important for this student to be hyper-critical about the post-colonial context and can even go on about it at exaggerated length because in fact they're coming from a different perspective than myself – and I think too, the um – this comes into play.

(Lecturer)

2.3 The Transparency Myth

It is assumed that all degree programme documentation will provide what are supposed to be transparent descriptions of the criteria for assessment. They have become part of the 'administrative' paraphernalia which universities are required to make public as a result of Quality Assurance Agency. They are supposedly intended to reassure students by providing what is considered to be a clear framework but because they are also produced 'by mandate' they retain a certain quality of 'ticking the right boxes' through use of 'key words and phrases associated with 'capability' and 'competency' agendas around which much of the tensions existing in universities revolve – the research-teaching axis.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with attempting to articulate what it is that students are expected to do and how they are being judged on their work. However, expressing what 'we' want in terms that students understand is not as easy as it might seem and many attempts have been made to establish assessment criteria.

Brown et. al. (1996), for instance, as part of their key involvement in the Higher Education Academy (formerly Institute of Learning and Teaching) attempt to specify what 'good' assessment should include in their ten point 'Assessment Manifesto' with which few educators would disagree at a first glance, but which, on closer inspection reveals itself to be contradictory, deterministic and, I would argue, contrary to the kind of environments that would engender successful learning. Few would argue with points such as 'Assessment should play a positive role in the learning experiences of students.' or 'Assessment processes and instruments should accommodate and encourage creativity and originality shown by students.' or 'Assessment needs to be valid.' But when we begin to examine the meanings of these strictures, then they become problematic indeed.

Take the following 'point':

4. Assessment needs to be valid. By this, we mean that assessment methods should be chosen which directly measure that which it is intended to measure, and not just a reflection in a different medium of the knowledge, skills or competences being assessed. (Brown et al, 1996)

However, once the authors attempt to 'clarify' what they mean by valid, they fall into vague, almost solipsistic argument. '...assessment methods should be chosen which directly measure that which it is intended to measure....' followed by '...and not **just** [my bold] a reflection in a **different medium** of the knowledge, skills or competences being assessed.' Without even entering the issue of the connotations surrounding 'knowledge' , 'skills' and 'competences' what seems to be suggested here is that assessment should ask students to 'replicate' what they have (apparently) learned rather than do

something with it (reflect in a different medium). And where does their own demand for encouragement of student creativity and originality (see above) fit here?

Such guidance criteria are based on the assumption that there are universal understandings of what the base concepts mean. Critics, such as Lea and Street (1996) and Lillis (2001) have commented on the problems surrounding what are essentially political agendas, arguing that such deterministic approaches to learning and the modes of assessment – specifically writing – only serve to reinforce 'transparency' myths. Transparency is a variable thing and explicitness⁵ can lead to an expectation that, firstly the things made explicit have the same meaning for everyone and secondly, that if you can show that you have 'done' the things you will succeed. Successful writing is more than the sum of its parts.

Too often criteria and benchmarks confound what they originally sought to clarify mainly because the interactions between tutors, students and the institution are subjective by dint of the fact that we are all human beings engaged in communicative practices which, no matter how hard 'we' try, cannot ever become fully objective, a notion that in itself needs to be problematised. O'Donovan et al (2004) argue that explicit assessment criteria, which derive from outdated positivist notions of what knowledge is, fail to work because knowledge of 'what we want' is largely tacit, contextual and based on professional experience and personal preferences. They warn against a culture of bean counting. 'We must refrain from the temptation to give yet more and more explanatory detail and guidelines to assessors and students lest the whole edifice crumbles under its own weight and is

⁵ I use 'explicitness' rather than the conventional 'explicitness' because I want to emphasise the process – that is – the *being or attempting to be* explicit rather than the more reified fixedness of the conventional noun form.



replaced with a stark realisation that no meaningful knowledge has been transferred in the unwieldy process.' (p.333)

Assessing student writing is difficult due largely to the complicated relationship between the participants outlined above. How far can the lecturer allow the student to deviate from received norms within the discipline? What is actually being assessed – knowledge, the ability to write well, success in 'speaking' in the disciplinary discourse? And in the end, are we concerned with progression, individuality and originality, or do we expect students to write as we do? These questions are unanswerable as they revolve around the epistemologies of the disciplines themselves. How we write about our discipline is also how we construct our discipline with, rather than through (usually) written language.

2.4 What on Earth do 'we' Want?

What lecturers want, and equally students' attempts at (second) guessing what lecturers want, plays large in the university student-lecturer relationship. In her discussion on agency and subjectivity in student writing, Scott (1999) points out that students have a general awareness of what is required of university writing. Her conversations with students indicate that they are well aware that they will have to be critical and creative and not simply reproduce information. But, as she goes on to argue, and as I myself have pointed out (English, 1999), being aware of expectations is not the same thing as knowing how to fulfil them or, indeed, knowing how they are realised within the framing of essay writing. Students spend much time trying to work out precisely what lecturers want in response to an essay

question and, as has often been the case, rumours abound among the student cohort as the following e-mail question demonstrates.

Hi Fiona! Just a brief question, is it possible to use bullet points in assignment.

Talked to a friend who said that they weren't allowed?

They know very well that they are writing for a narrow readership and understand that different readers might like different things as is demonstrated in Lillis (1999), for instance. It is difficult for students to understand the kind of tacit understanding of 'successful essay writing' that O'Donovan et al. (ibid) discuss and as a result there develops a sense that there is some kind of mystery (see Lillis, 1999 or 2001) surrounding the exchange of work and that somehow the lecturers are keeping secret what it is they want. However, it is precisely the gap between the lecturer's design and the student's interpretation that gives the space for difference between essays. After all, if there were a set of fully explicit criteria stating exactly what is wanted, there would be no space for individual response. However, this is not necessarily how students see it.

A recent experience is of an essay set for one of my units which invites students to develop their understanding of a particular theoretical area from the course which has interested them. (See Appendix 2.1) The frame for this development is to consider how that theoretical understanding can inform their practice (if at all). For the student, however, this can be problematic as the boundaries may seem less obvious than they do to the setter. It seems also that no matter how much the tutor tries to clarify 'what they want' the student still feels at a loss. This is evidenced by the ways in which lecturers get inundated with questions about how to tackle the question, despite apparently 'clear' instructions. In my own case, even despite the repeated

additional clarifications, many students simply didn't understand my aim which was to give them the 'opportunity' to find out something new and instead they ended up rehashing ground they had clearly been over many times before.

On discussing this with the student group I was fascinated by the responses I got. Some students said they hadn't read beyond the general overview instruction – the essay question itself. Others said that they had analysed the question sheet in a group, deconstructing each phrase until their heads were spinning and their confusion was complete. Yet others reported being so overwhelmed by the amount of information that they reverted to old familiar approaches to essay writing rather than take any of the 'risks' implied by the rubric. But what is clear is that in all cases, the intended explicitness of the rubric confused rather than clarified.

In the anthropology programme taught by one of my informants, one year's exam students were so infuriated by the very open questions that were set for the paper that they went in delegation to complain⁶. These students wanted limiting and highly structured questions which they felt they could control while the lecturers had imagined that by opening the questions up to a freer interpretation they were giving students the freedom to handle the task in their own way. What the tutors felt to be empowering had the opposite effect on the students.

The handing out of essay questions acquires almost a ritual status where students expect to be given an essay to write and teachers expect to give one. It is part and parcel of the academic engagement starting, in the UK at least,

⁶ Three of them came to talk to me about this and to show me the 'letter' they had written in protest. I was able to mollify them somewhat by attempting to explain the lecturers' good intentions, though I am not entirely sure they were convinced!

from a very early age where primary school students are initiated into academic literacy practices through the educational orientation to the analysis and discussion of texts and the production of a range of different written (and spoken) genres.⁷ The student essay fits within this framework of developing practices, though it is interesting that despite the wide variety at earlier levels of learning, the university remains largely 'mono-generic' in terms of the type of student production it prefers. Andrews (2003) refers to this in consideration of whether the essay has outlived its usefulness concluding that the genre needs 'refreshing' or 'challenging more vigorously as the default genre of the academy' (p.126) so as to maintain the kind of qualities that are valued in the university but which seem to get buried within the round of production and reproduction discussed above.

I asked eight lecturers from the institution involved in this study for their impressions of student essay writing. Some I interviewed face to face and others responded to an open ended e-mail questionnaire (See Appendix 2.2). I wanted to get some feedback on what they liked and didn't like about student work; their dreads and their desires.

These discussions provided valuable insights into the reasons behind their assignments and their expectations of how students might respond. For example:

Q: What influences you in your choice of assignment tasks?

A: I try to set questions that actually respond directly to key texts that I've asked the students to read. I usually try to set a question that's fairly

⁷ See extensive research on primary and secondary school writing in several publications relating to the 'language monitoring' project and to the national curriculum where 'types' of practices are explicitly referred to.

general both in my written assignments and also on my exam papers. I like to leave the question broad enough so that it gives the student the opportunity to demonstrate what it is that they know and to bring in salient issues [...] I like to give them the opportunity to bring in their own regional interests into the essay question, but at the same time the essay question is specific enough that it is addressing key theoretical concerns that were taught... (Anthropology⁸)

In the following I will look more closely at the reported desires and dreads of this group of lecturers. I want to look at their comments as a backdrop against which to place the regenred productions and to see how the new work might fulfil the desires expressed here. I will link their comments to my own desires and dreads in my capacity as a 'subject' lecturer⁹ and will compare them also to the kind of criteria suggested by Departmental Products such as handbooks or institutional criteria for what is desirable in a 'good' essay. In order to separate my reflections from my commentary on these and the reflections of other lecturer informants, I have italicised my reflective thoughts.

2.4.1 Personal Reflections¹⁰

First of all, I want the writer to do well or as one of my interview informants put it, 'I'm kind of rooting for them'. While reading, I'm urging them to explain, clarify, interpret and exploit all the bits of their work – and to

⁸ I have indicated the discipline because I feel it provides a further context for these comments

⁹ Since starting this research I have moved from the position of academic literacies coordinator to subject lecturer (TESOL) in a different university. This has allowed me to develop different personal perspectives on the entire essay writing experience.

¹⁰ I have indented and italicised my own reflections here as I am using them in a similar way to the interview data obtained from my lecturer informants. This strategy marks out the two professional 'identities' that I have had during the course of this work and enables me to compare my own 'subject lecturer' perspectives with those of other subject lecturers.

answer those questions that I have about what they're saying as I read along. I may have a doubt about something or feel that something could have been developed better and as I read, I look out to see if it has been done later on. At times it is a bit like being on a rollercoaster with peaks and troughs of reaction.

My expectations are not always about them producing something that I would write in the way I'd write it, but I do hope to see ideas developed and explained and picked up. For example, a student may write something 'back to front' compared to how I might expect it to be written, so I have to suspend judgement until I reach the end. This approach to reading is something that has emerged out of my own developing understanding of the many different cultural and personal ways of writing. It is difficult, though, to work against my own personal expectations and preferences.

I engage as if in conversation – commenting verbally or non verbally, nodding or shaking my head, laughing, groaning, sometimes noting in the margin for my reference and as an aide-memoir for later written feedback.

I like a discussion that is contextualised. I like it to be political in the most general sense – for instance a challenge to something or an acknowledgement that things may not be as they seem. I like students to argue and interact with their readings in some way – a subjective element. I like personal anecdotes and examples to illustrate or situate the work. I like assignments which make me smile or laugh – where students have been candid and natural through referring to some incident or other, provided it is made relevant. This kind of inclusion lends a quality of authenticity to the discussion and reassures me that the student feels some kind of ownership of the work. I like there to be further possibilities stemming from their work.

I can be overly critical and have to rein in my critical comments. For instance, I may see something in the discussion, based on my own personal preferences, experiences, interests and prejudices, that they don't see or they don't feel important. It might be an omission of a particular perspective or it might be what I might consider a naïve response to something they've read. This is similar to the comment made by the anthropology lecturer cited above. In such cases I have to decide whether it's worth mentioning (as a teacherly thing) or whether I should leave it alone. Sometimes the omission may influence my marking when I feel they should have considered it, and sometimes it may not have any grading impact, when I feel it is something that they have no reason to have thought about.

I always check the bibliography to see where and who they're quoting; the allegiances as well as the relevance and validity of sources particularly if the topic is a bit out of my immediate knowledge. I will also consider reading some if they seem relevant to future work and courses.

Do I treat students as peers? Not usually, as I am also expected by them and by my socially agreed position (lecturer), to give them a grade, to provide teacherly feedback, to evaluate their work in the process of validating them as successful (or otherwise) students on a given course of study. However, it also depends on how I feel about the work and the level of expertise of the writer. I am not an expert in all of their areas of choice so cannot know everything. I certainly look out for new and interesting points and in that case treat them as having expertise and knowledge which I might not have. But still – I am marking it all and am having to respond to how much or little of the course input – content, perspectives, issues – is evident. With really excellent work – that is work which is expert and professional –

it is difficult to allocate a mark as the process almost demeans the quality of the piece. It is a very strange position.

This last feeling was also commented on by one of my lecturer informants.

... and it's real fun when you look at it and think, right, I'm now reading this as if I were reading a professional article and you actually – and then I actually move physically in my chair – and I tend to – and you say 'right' ok – this is serious and I'm going to enjoy this and you're immediately giving a new kind of respect to the student. You're saying, I'm now switching on my intellectual faculties full because you have persuaded me that I have to. (Media & Film Studies)

2.4.2 Talking to Other Lecturers

My discussions with other lecturers produced, as already indicated, responses similar to my own and were as much concerned with organisational matters such as clarity and coherence as they were with originality, relevance and use of course content. Of course, as this is only a very small sample of people no claims can be made about the 'universality' of such desires, but the strong similarities between them give the impression that there is a coherence in what lecturers want to see in their students' work. The comments indicate highly subjective desires such as 'intelligence' or 'elegance' or 'enthusiasm', alongside the more easily articulated expectations such as 'use of technical terminology' or 'careful editing'. Somewhere in between these extremes are the 'analytical' and 'critical' and 'argumentative' elements associated with how students handle the information.

I have categorised the comments obtained from this mini-survey under thematic headings which represent the areas that all my informants were concerned about. The questions I asked did not necessarily lead them to these particular themes, rather they emerged across the range of questions asked. Under each thematic heading I've summarised the specific points that were mentioned. As the sample was so small, I do not feel it necessary to talk in terms of percentages. What I can say is that everyone mentioned issues relating to each of the themes and I have indicated how many mentioned the specific points.

Using Course / Disciplinary Content

- link to/evidence of familiarity with course content & course readings (8)
- working with 'data' or course subject 'matter' (3)
- understanding/command of the topic (3)
- use of technical terminology (3)

Also I appreciate that they show an understanding of the conventions in the discipline, for example the adoption of a certain type of discourse in discussing a topic, which departs from everyday conventions or perspectives. (Linguistics)

I want them to deal with the debates and find themselves where they stand in the debate (Development Studies)

Analysis And Evaluation Of Course Content (Criticality)

- measured judgements supported by evidence / convincing (7)

- use of course content and common (disciplinary) understandings to develop new questions and insights (6)
- interpretation (not restatement) (6)
- thought through ideas/analysis (6)
- coherent discussion/argument (5)
- contextualisation of ideas into disciplinary preoccupations/issues (4)

They have to show that they have understood the major concepts and can express them in writing. (Law)

[I don't like] sloppy editing esp when this gets in the way of understanding what a student wants to say; a feeling of reading something not thought through, inconsistent and written with a lack of interest.

[And I don't like] Too strong judgements, based on insufficient evidence; re-stating others' points of view without properly thinking about them. (Linguistics)

Structure And Organisation

- clear structure – introduction (8)
- careful editing/ academic style and use of English (8)
- direction (4)

[I like] A coherent piece of writing which is grounded in the course discussion, i.e. starts from some common background, and uses this to introduce something new, i.e. something which I don't know (Linguistics)

[I like] Good organisation and clean presentation. I hate messy work because it is unprofessional. (Law)

Originality

- develop new questions and insights (6)
- original ideas (6)

I am also very interested in depth of analysis, because I do research on the topic that the students write about, so new ideas or angles are always a quality that I appreciate. (Law)

Original thoughts substantiated with evidence. New ways of looking at old questions. (Religious Studies)

Personalising

- linking experience/own knowledge to course content (6)

When I come across some evidence that the student actually sat down and gave the task some thought, and engaged with it and produced a personal reaction to it, I feel like giving them a first just for that. (Japanese Linguistics)

Input & Performance Attributes

- excitement/ interest/ enthusiasm (5)
- effort (3)
- sincerity (1), confidence (1), intelligence (1), elegance (1), playfulness (1)

...those students who can playfully manipulate these kind of things [personal anecdotes, newspaper articles etc.] – bring them into their argument and bring the whole theoretical discussion onto a new tangent – those are the essays that I think merit the higher [grades] (Anthropology)

How then do these kinds of expectations and desires fit within the guidelines set out in course documentation and the demands for transparency and objectivity. The following extract from the handbook I referred to in Chapter One, which attempts to explain what is sought from a student essay, is a good example.

Essay writing is a way of mastering a body of facts or ideas. You accumulate knowledge on a particular topic by reading the relevant literature, and then present what you have found in your own terms and in your own way. You thereby retain the material more effectively than merely reading.

This could be said to correspond, in part, to Theme One (using course content) identified above in that it concerns the 'accumulation and mastering of a body of knowledge'.

The second part of the guidelines relates to the reasons for writing essays – the transferability element – and seeks to point out to students the benefits to be derived from this activity. These comments relate to Themes Two and Three above.

Essay writing develops skills of selection, analysis and condensation. Out of the mass of information available, you have to decide what to include and what to leave out. You have to be alert to contradictory arguments and

points of view presented by different authors and you have to present your answers in a succinct form without over-simplifying.

It is only when we come to the assessment criteria in this handbook, and specifically that relating to the highest category of award that issues relating to Themes Four, Five and Six appear. This is understandable since the lecturers in my survey were commenting on what they valued most.

- Shows clear evidence of wide and relevant reading and an engagement with the conceptual issues
- Develops a sophisticated and intelligent argument
- Shows rigorous use and a sophisticated understanding of relevant source materials, balancing appropriately between factual detail and key theoretical issues. Materials are engaged directly and their assumptions and arguments challenged and/or appraised
- Shows original critical thinking and a willingness to take risks

These criteria reflect the comments I derived from my surveying of the group of lecturers, which is reassuring in so far as it indicates that there is coherence within the kinds of criteria that academics are using to judge their students' work. However, in articulating these 'desires' in such categorical terms, the guide writer, though genuinely attempting to clarify the situation, provides the opportunity for further obfuscation. By laying out in what he considered to be explicit, transparent terms exactly what was required of the successful piece of writing he opens up the possibility for an entirely new range of student uncertainties in much the same way that my own experiences discussed above served to confuse my students. In this case, despite the superficial explicitness of the words and phrases used and the unproblematic way in which they are assumed to mean, much is open to interpretation.

The challenges embedded within the terms of expression are disguised by the apparent applicability that such guidelines imply. In other words, if you apply this then you will succeed. But of course it is not as simple as it seems and, as many writers have shown (e.g. Ivanic, 1998, Candlin & Plum, 1999, Lea & Street, 1999, Lillis, 2001). How, for instance, can we understand '*accumulate knowledge*'? Does it mean an additive collection – a bit like an encyclopaedia or does it mean that you process it in some way? What exactly is meant by '*relevant literature*'? Is it what's on the reading list, is it something that can be found on the internet, is it something specific to the topic or is it something that the lecturer values? And then there is the presentation '*in your own terms*' and , more interestingly, '*in your own way*'. Does this mean that the student is free to write outside of the essayist convention (in your own way) and without using disciplinary terms (in your own terms)? Is this an invitation to write as you wish or an exhortation to 'not plagiarise' through cutting and pasting? This mix of explicit and implicit criteria which typifies the way in which we assess is precisely what O'Donovan et.al. (2004), mentioned above, are talking about when they challenge the criterion oriented approaches favoured by governments and administrators seeking 'measurable' outcomes. The kinds of 'qualities' sought by lecturer readers combines the describable (e.g. use of disciplinary terminology) with the indescribable (e.g. originality, enthusiasm) in ways that can never be wholly captured by lists of assessment criteria.

In a previous study (English 2000) I analysed student writing in order to explore how the writers did 'analysing' and 'evaluation'. In other words, what did it look like? from the perspectives of what I called content organisation and discourse organisation, following earlier work I had been involved in (Gorman et al. 1991) I compared extracts from two first year

essays, one which had been highly valued – awarded an 'A' and one which was barely allocated a pass mark. Admittedly, the comparison was between a British (English speaking) student and a Japanese student. But what I was attempting to identify was what might have determined the different marks awarded. What were the specific features of the texts – over and above the content itself – which might have influenced the decisions of the readers?

What I found was that the successful essay (at least in terms of its grade) contained a far greater quantity of attitudinal discourse links than the less successful essay which tended to use only sequencing links. Moreover, when considering the propositional content, the successful writer tended to offer a far greater number of evaluative and speculative statements while the other writer's statements tended to be factual and more obviously derivative. In the case of the 'successful' essay, what seemed to be being valued was a writer's ability to incorporate an evaluative and speculative dimension to the content offered rather than the representation of content as factual description. In other words, the 'personal', 'original' and 'critical' elements identified by the lecturers above were embedded, not only in what students wrote, but in how they wrote it.

2.5 Interactions

As anyone who has ever been a teacher knows, what takes place between the imparting of information (including instructions) and the production of student work is something of a mystery.

The following schema illustrates the kind of interactions that takes place around an assignment. The terms of reference (design, production and distribution) derive from a multimodal framework (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Figure 2.1

Here the student assignment task, whatever it is, as corresponds to the notion of 'design'; in other words, what stands between content and expression. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) In the case of the essay assignment it is the boundaries of what the writer is supposed to write about and in that context it is constrained by the expectations of the task setter – the tutor who brings all his own understandings of how the design should be realised; in other words a 'frame'. In this sense the tutor is something like the client¹¹ in a transactional relationship, one who has a particular design in mind. She or he may not be the actual designer (that may fall to an architect – e.g. course leader, previous tutors), but as already discussed, the tutor generally has an idea of what the desired product should look like. The student, then, becomes the artisan the producer responding to the design through the assignment question. The explicitness of the 'blueprint' depends

¹¹ See John Wood (1999) re: notions of client –producer relationships

very much on the designer¹² and the degree to which they themselves can articulate what they want, although recently, as an assignment designer myself I have come to realise that sometimes, even the most explicit of design can still cause serious problems of interpretation as illustrated by the

The design aspect of the 'essay' has built into it a particular set of expectations as illustrated by the lecturers above. This includes specific content elements as well as particular ways of talking about those elements, a disciplinary discourse (Hyland, 2000). There is, however, in certain disciplinary fields a move away from canonical ways of writing about things towards a more diverse and flexible approach. This could lead to a degree of freedom for student writers or rather producers, though it might also lead to an even greater sense of confusion as the parameters become less obviously defined. As I have already found and discussed, students often feel at a loss as to what is required or expected despite apparently 'clear' explanation. The following e-mail extract exemplifies this with its demands for further 'clarification'.

28/4/2004 Assignment

Hi Fiona!

Hope you are fine. Here are my questions for the assignment.

Could you give me a brief recommendation about how much I should value the different parts of the assignment.

For example approximately how many percent of it should be the analysis of the materials, how many percent should be analysing the theories, and how much space should I use for considering the usefulness of the materials in my context.

¹² I have attempted to interpret this process by considering the explicit (what is on the surface) and the implicit (what requires insider knowledge of the ideological understandings of the discipline in the particular department and on the particular course) in 'A Handbook for University Study

Despite the highly detailed 'task' sheet I had devised (see Appendix 2.3) which sought to respond to the kinds of questions students might ask themselves, the student here redesigned it in ways which I couldn't have anticipated. Moreover, had I allocated precise percentages as to the 'amount' of effort to be spent on each 'component' this would undoubtedly have caused a different kind of consternation.

The designers (the lecturer and all previous lecturers, members of a specific discourse community) have between them developed the disciplinary discourse with all its particular preoccupations and its particular ways of talking about things and if those ways are in transition then the boundaries within which students are expected to produce may become even more hazy. Conventional academic discourse generally uses linguistic (verbal) modes to (re)produce knowledge about certain things and is inevitably shaped by the particular topics of the day, in other words, the cultural and political and social moments in time (history) and space (geography). The student essay is a genre which is refined according to the discourse community it is produced for. As discussed in Chapter One, it is a genre which in some senses shadows the 'original' – the academic article or paper¹³, but isn't actually the same. The article is written for a 'real', public audience of peers and others while the essay is written for a narrow audience of self and one or two others. It does not have the same 'currency' as an article and the writer is always positioned in a 'subordinate' role.¹⁴ This corresponds well with Bernstein's (e.g. 2000) theory on differences between creating, recontextualising and reproducing.

¹³ Interesting that in the US they call them term papers while in the UK (Europe) they're called essays.

¹⁴ See English and Fusari (2003) for discussion of this. Also Ivanic, 1998 or Lillis, 2001

Distribution, in this context can be seen as the submission system, its acceptable medium – e.g. printed on paper, the assessment and feedback and, of course, the grade. This last also fits well into the client-producer analogy, the grade equating to payment. This is perhaps becoming a dangerous analogy, but so long as it is kept at the metaphorical level it may be safe to use. The distribution aspect, in the case of student writing, is highly limited in terms of access, operating in the closed circle of readers numbering possibly only one, the tutor, apart from the writer herself. The fact that the cycle is closed off in this way places much power in the hands of the tutor and consequently (possibly) less in that of the student.

However, if the practice of the communicative interaction allows for dialogue via drafting or opportunities to seek specific advice, for instance, the cycle can remain open and a different kind of interaction can take place. To illustrate this I include extracts from the e-mail correspondence with the Masters student mentioned above.

Hi, Fiona

It's such a pleasant thing to receive this mail and know I can talk to you about what's going on about my dissertation work, and myself.

How have you been in there? I hope you are having a relaxing holiday and enjoying yourself over some different flavors in life.

It's been quite exciting for me to get immersed in my reading, thinking, and writing.

I am now excited because I think I have really found out something that is so different, so different from what I have long believed is true, and so different from what others have firmly believed is true. This 'others' somehow 'unfortunately' happened to include some real 'authorities' in the world.

And then comes up the problem.

I have got two types of 'torture' now, however.

The first 'torture' has come from the highly controversial debate ...

[...]

A fear then comes up from the deep inside of me: am I risking my 'life'? in the sense I am just doing a 'dissertation' that leads to a degree, a 'simulated' work of little practical values? Is my efforts worthwhile? Crystal is the big world authority on English. I am a small postgraduate student. and Phillipson, and Pennycook, Canagarajah...they are also real 'authorities' on language and language pedagogy. I am an amateur mostly driven by my belief in the values of seeking better understandings of language, the world around us, and ourselves.

But the unsatisfactions I feel about what they have claimed to be true are relentlessly driving me to go ahead, and the problem is now where I would settle my minds and present a 'coherent' and 'organized' work?

I hope my 'excitement' and 'tortures' and 'fears' would not affect you enjoying your holiday. You do need some relaxation for a change. If they do, I apologise in advance.

Your student

Fiona English <f.english@londonmet.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear John

I think you must write what you want to write and what you feel reflects how you understand the situation. Your engagement with/interactions with the work you've been reading is important, particularly since you are an 'expert' in so far as your position as a teacher in China goes. Your dissertation is not entirely a simulation, though I do understand what you mean - it is a closed piece of writing for a very narrow readership. However, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't suggest new ways of interpreting and challenging the ideas you have been reading about. Think of this dissertation as a process of learning - of developing your interpretive voice. The making of knowledge, so to speak, is a process of transformation - each bit might be a small one, but this is how it works.

[...]

Don't be too afraid to challenge the 'gods'. You won't be risking your 'life' with this dissertation, but instead take it as the chance to explore and examine the issues which have attracted you.

Good luck

Fiona

Hi, Fiona

Thank you very much for your advice

I think I have now got my problems solved, thanks to your suggestions.

I am now working towards the conclusion chapter [...]

Hope you are enjoying your holiday there

Your student

This example illustrates the ways in which dialogue facilitates thinking for both parties. The issue of assessment is important, but instead of concern about grades the student is more concerned about the validity of his ideas and the context in which he is locating them. The e-mail correspondence provides not just the chance to discuss his concerns and anxieties about his work but perhaps more importantly the chance to clarify and test out his own ideas. Here the distributive aspect of the production in hand could be seen as a dynamic process rather than a final closure. Power is still obviously operating within the frame of lecturer-student but it is equally clear that the parties concerned seem comfortable with this arrangement. In this instance, apart from initial discussions around the dissertation, these are the only interactions we had. The resultant work was awarded a distinction. However, not all assessment circumstances work like this. Assessment can also be experienced as closure particularly if it is summative alone. Formal exam essays are the extreme example in the educational context since feedback on these is rarely if ever offered.

In the end, students cannot know 'what we want' until they write, and the problem then is that if they haven't done 'what we want' and the mark counts towards their overall result, then they feel devastated. The context of assessment and the 'deal' that we as experts and students are not, establishes the unequal relationship as expressed by one of my lecturer informants: *'I think we land up reading our student's work expecting there to be*

problems with it... Our job, then, is to help through feedback and where possible, face to face discussion. But feedback too has its problems, as the opening quote to this chapter demonstrates bound up with assumptions about the relative validity of individual interpretations.

The difficulty in knowing more than we can tell, to paraphrase Polanyi (1997:136), is part of what creates the tension between what the lecturer wants and what the student thinks he wants and it is only through the exchanges that occur in the process of dialogue that no amount of up front explanation will help. The cycle of 'design' and 'redesign' that is part and parcel of all communication can all too easily become closed off in the essay as assignment. How does the student demonstrate 'mastery' of a 'body of knowledge' and be 'original', 'enthusiastic' and 'elegant' all at the same time? To do so the student writer must be confident in knowledge and understanding as well as confident as a writer per se to achieve the double goal of style and content that essay writing seems to demand. And as Read et.al. (2001) found in their study with undergraduates, this kind of confidence seems to be quite elusive.

The question then is one of how students can develop their confidence as writers and as knowers in their own right when they inhabit¹⁵ the role of student. How can they negotiate their way through the different interactions that occur in the process of study without experiencing the difficulties they encounter? And in the end, is it desirable that they experience a problem-free ride? After all, as I have already suggested, it is in negotiating the gaps between 'design' and 'redesign' and the communications that occur between

¹⁵ I want now to avoid the passivity of 'they are positioned' here as I feel that the power relations are far more complex than the 'victimhood' or 'agentlessness' implicit in the phrase.

'production' and 'distribution', regardless of how dynamic these are, that learning takes place.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on a variety of resources, culled from the range of different learning and teaching contexts in which I have been involved, in an attempt to provide an impression of the 'communicative landscape' in which university students and teachers work. I have sought to convey the problems surrounding the aspirations of both students and lecturers alike, often competing but equally often converging. What is clear is that demands and desires for explicitness around assignments tend to be futile as terms and frames of reference can never be equivalent between the communication of what is wanted and the articulation of what is thought to have been wanted. I suggested that these communicative interactions could be understood with a multimodal framework using the concepts of 'design', 'redesign', 'production' and 'distribution' in discussing how students and lecturers interact around assignments.

The next Chapter establishes the theoretical framing of my work and develops a conceptualisation of genre as a resource used in the process of communication. It provides the underpinning for Chapter Four which explains my analytical approach and for the following chapters where I analyse in detail the work produced by my students.

Chapter Three – Genre as a Semiotic Resource: theorising communicative flow

'And whether I think it's right or wrong I'm not going to moralise about the issue it's simply about the parameters that are defined by discipline and I don't think that those boundaries are easily negotiated or easily changed.'

Lecturer

3.1. Introduction

The lecturer whose words preface this chapter both problematises and confirms established disciplinary practice that typifies the production of academic knowledge. Despite his very positive response to the regenerated work that I showed him and his subsequent remark against the privileging of written forms over other forms of representation, it highlights the power of established ways (genres and discourses) of communicating, in this case, disciplinary knowledge.

... unfortunately as academics we are rather constrained to the spoken or the written word because that's the medium that we use to convey our knowledge – so we privilege that form of knowledge and in fact to the exclusion of all other forms of knowledge...

In the context of learning and teaching, particularly though not solely in Higher Education, the student essay is the default genre for the demonstration of academic learning in social sciences and humanities. Just

as with other genres, the essay is considered a stable and reliable form due to the familiarity with which it is experienced. Students themselves expect to write essays and lecturers expect to 'set' essays as assignments. They have developed an impression of social and cultural stability precisely because of their normalised status.

So what is it about essays and other academic genres that makes them so dominant within scholarly communities and why is it so difficult to cross the boundaries that these genres seem to imply? The answer, I suggest lies in the way genres work on our conceptualisations of (disciplinary) knowledge and how they shape that knowledge through their impacts on the texts that they give rise to. In other words, genres imply particular ways of meaning making in particular social and cultural communicative interactions; an understanding which has developed through my analysis of the work in hand.

With this in mind, when I started to look at the work produced by my students, I wanted to provide a direct comparison between the different versions – mapping one against the other. I tried several techniques to achieve this – grids with corresponding extracts, line by line analysis of one followed by line by line analysis of the other. Although these approaches were revealing in themselves, they were extremely unwieldy. What I needed to do was step back and try to see what the differences actually were – not specifically in terms of language or of content or of 'voice' and so on, but rather in terms of what these differences seemed to achieve.

Rather than considering only how the versions differed in their generic forms, it became more relevant to consider what the different genres allowed to happen. There were changes in how the content was articulated – through

enacted dialogues, through use of different resources such as settings, actions, character creation as well as storylines, events and fictional interactions and it is through these that the writers were enabled to do things that were not available to them through the conventional student essay.¹

You know I feel more flexible – I haven't looked at it in only one way.

I feel like I could use that knowledge again quite comfortably. (Anya)

This flexibility was, of course, partly brought about by the fact that the students wrote the new productions after already having worked through the issues and ideas via the usual process of essay writing. They were no longer approaching the task from a kind of *ab initio* position – but from a position of experience. They commented on the effect this had on the process of writing:

All the information was there already in one sense. There wasn't any having to go off and read from different sources and in some ways that made it more difficult because there was less to fall back on but in some ways it was nicer because it felt more kind of as if it flowed. (Andy)

and on their understanding of the subject:

I think I was able to stand back a little further the second time around – I got a little distance between myself and the subject which in one sense certainly helped for objectivity but then the voices all remained very much subjective but that distance did help to perceive the subject in a better way you kind of get a better grasp a better hold of it a more

¹ I summarise the work in the next chapter

homogeneous kind of all encompassing idea of what the subject actually is. (Dan)

The new work that my students produced made me recognise that something substantive had occurred between the production of the original work and the regenerated work. As they themselves pointed out, the regenerating was different in terms of how they were able to work with the information and ideas already presented in the original essay versions. In other words, their choice of a new genre forced them to engage differently with the information.

Of course, as I have already said, this can partly be explained by the fact that the new productions were a revisiting of earlier work, but equally, as later chapters will reveal, the regenerating also resulted in shifts in how the students could make new meanings in their work. In other words, the new genres afforded new meaning potentials. This, therefore, encouraged me to think of genre in a new way.

In this chapter, therefore, I want to explore the idea of genre as a resource used in the process of communication because I think it plays a fundamental role in shaping how meaning can be made. Instead of seeing it as a category which characterises a particular type of thing I want to think of it as a resource which allows particular things to happen, or rather allows producers to make particular things happen; hence my focus on the affordances of genres. In the process of this discussion I will propose a theory of communication which incorporates an understanding of genre as category with resource implications in the making of meaning. In other words, genre has meaning potential in that it demands texts to work in particular ways through use of particular material resources. I will draw particularly on the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) in developing my

analytical perspective (design, production and distribution) as I have already done in the previous chapter. I will draw into my discussions the work of others who have in very different ways contributed to the theoretical perspectives which have inspired my own understandings, notably the so called Russian School comprising Bakhtin, Volosinov and Medvedev².

3.2 Uses of Genre

Before going any further I need to clarify some terms of reference, particularly because there is an obvious problem in discussing *genre*. As Kress (1993) has pointed out 'the term comes with a considerable baggage of accumulated meaning' (p.31). Indeed, most discussions on genre in the literature identify this as a problem from the outset, Swales (1990) being a good example with his five pronged effort to reach what he calls a working definition (p.45). I am no exception to this practice, and will therefore, explain my own use of the concept and in so doing will contrast it, or rather juxtapose it, with other uses of the term.

Vygotsky's (1934/1962) discussion on his collaboration with Luria in Uzbekistan suggests that human concept formation involves categorisation. This, in turn, depends very much on how we prioritise specific features of whatever it is we are classifying. This, they argued, depends on the social and cultural experiences of the people doing the categorisation. The decision to classify this way or that is contextually determined and depends on what

² Authorship of works have been variously attributed to Bakhtin or to the different named authors, Bakhtin, Volosinov and Medvedev. The translators' (Matejka and Titunik) preface to *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* which they firmly attribute to Volosinov, provides some background to the mystery. My own view from reading the work (admittedly in translation) is that they operated as a kind of cooperative.

is most relevant at the time. For example, if we have a collection of novels we might want to arrange them into types according to their thematic content (romantic, historical, detective, science fiction and so on). However, if we have a collection of books we might want to arrange them according to different criteria (novels, textbooks, reference etc.). It is not that we necessarily do these things, as a glance at my own bookshelves will show, but in certain circumstances we will make decisions about classification criteria which serve the purpose of the moment. In other words, we classify things because we want to say something about these objects or because we see some kind of coherence among them. Classification means.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a concept such as genre would emerge in relation to texts, or rather textual products³. The term 'genre' of course is the French word for 'type' but because of its long history of use within scholarly debate around textual products, it has acquired a status that the English, or other languages, term 'type' does not have. It has, as Kress above has said, accumulated meanings which depend on the social, disciplinary and/or research community that the user 'belongs' to. The term genre has come to mean much more than its counterpart 'type' precisely because it is a term referring to a concept rather than to a 'thing'.

3.3 A General Definition of Genre

The term *genre* tells us that we are talking about textual products. It tells us that the textual products under discussion are identified as belonging to a particular type. It doesn't tell us what the identifying criteria are nor does it

³ I will clarify this concept further as the discussion proceeds. For the moment a textual product is what is produced in the course of a communicative event in the making of meaning.

tell us the type of product being defined. The term can operate at an abstract level whereby we can refer to 'genre' as a concept. But when referring to actual products we need to qualify the term by linking it to a specific frame of reference. Thus we arrive at a kind of classificatory labelling: novels, plays, poems; jazz, classical, pop; interviews, lectures, debates. Each of these labels contains an understanding of generic cohesiveness in that there are shared understandings of what each of these genres imply. This, of course, is not quite as straightforward as this suggests since the understandings depend on social, cultural and individual factors. Hence the proliferation of genre categories (jazz, hip-hop, grime). The branches (genres and subgenres) can never be fully tied down because the crucial factor about genre, and this is to do with its association with textual products, is that it is a social phenomenon connected to identity and identification.

3.3.1 Genre and Cultural Products

Having set out this generalised interpretation of genre and I will now go on to consider more specific perspectives which, I hope, will clarify the above. In recent years it has become ubiquitous in its use, particularly in discussions around popular media, resulting, undoubtedly, from the literary associations with which it has a long tradition. Discussions of cultural products like film, music, art⁴ and, of course, literature, use the term to identify or classify them into types to allow for a kind of immediate reference point. Music listings pages in a newspaper exemplify this approach with their arrangement into broad genres such as pop, rock, jazz, classical, opera of the upcoming performances. These music categories equate, to the genre labels associated with literature, poem, novel, play, biography which also serve as identifying

⁴ Fine arts also use the term 'school' to indicate style and allegiance. This is different from genre which indicates the frame in which the text is made and hence the anticipated features of that text. The question of style is an interesting one as it can be linked to the concept of genre if 'style' is taken to mean a particular feature which typifies a given genre.

markers. In other words, categorising into genres allows us to predict the kind of experience the text will provide. For instance, we have certain expectation of a poem which concern things like organisation – it will be differently organised compared to a novel or a short story. There may be an expectation of rhyme and rhythm influencing, perhaps, whether it should be read aloud or silently. There are also expectations of the 'content' of a poem. And these expectations can be further categorised into poetry genres like sonnet or a haiku or an ode, each with its own particular characteristics. In other words, recognising the genre sets off a chain of expectations of how the communicative event will proceed.

Viewing genre from a dual (social and material) perspective in this way is by no means a new idea. Medvedev (and colleagues) considered genre as having a double orientation; a contextual orientation which relates to the social and a thematic orientation which relates to the content (Medvedev, 1928 as summarised in Titutnik, 1986). Later on I will also suggest that genre has a *semiotic* orientation, in other words, that genres afford particular ways of making meaning and a *discursive* orientation which concerns issues of identity and agency.

3.3.2 Genre as Communicative Practice

The use of genre as a linguistic category rather than a literary category emerged from social linguistics (e.g. Hymes, 1974) where genre was associated with the idea of the 'speech act' (Searle, 1969) involved in the communication. For example, in Hymes' (ibid) model of communicative competence, genre is one element that combines to establish a communicative event. The social function of genre as a linguistic category is developed in Halliday & Hasan (1989) where genre is associated with

everyday situations' (p.54) such as the 'service encounter' which, it is argued, emerges out of everyday social interactions and becomes an established set of textual exchanges. Hasan (ibid) develops a framework, 'contextual configuration' which is comprised of a series of linked utterances that together enact a recognisable communicative event. Genre, in this case, is the social framing of the 'contextual configuration'. It is what makes the participants make their text in the way they do. Hence, a service encounter (e.g. buying and selling something) proceeds in certain ways and, according to Hasan, the genre or rather 'contextual configuration' can predict certain 'obligatory elements' of the textual structure and sequence necessary for the communication to work within that generic frame. Her model also allows for 'optional elements' which can be accommodated in the course of the interaction precisely because the genre has provided the contextual frame for the communication. Thus, in a service encounter it is necessary to have the compulsory elements associated with the purchase and sale (the request, the offer/provision, payment) and provided those elements are present, other (optional) elements can be fitted in and understood as 'belonging' simply because they are located in the familiar frame of 'service encounter'⁵.

In this case, genre is a socially experienced, socially made and socially determined frame which provides a kind of identity to a text. It is the particular frame which makes a text recognisable as belonging to a particular 'type' of communicative event. This text is recognisable as belonging to its type through the various 'features' that it entails and the social purposes for and in which it is used. Because (or so long as) it is recognisable, a genre invites a particular kind of interaction with particular kinds of elements in particular social circumstances. The framing which the genre provides

⁵ See also E. Ventola, 1983, 'Contrasting Schematic Structures in Service Encounters', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol 4:3

prepares the participants for the communicative experience itself. Certain 'verbal phrases' (or motifs, or gestures etc.) come to be associated with specific genres and serve as a *key* to the kind of communicative event that is being enacted. This prepares the participants for their participation. It puts everyone in the 'right' frame of mind. It gives a sense of either reassurance, if the genre key is familiar or confusion if the key is unfamiliar. The phrase 'Excuse me...' implies a certain social setting (request or favour) which anticipates a sequence of communicative practices (utterances and actions) which are enacted within particular contexts that recur within the societies and cultures from which they emerge. There is a communicative collusion between the participants whereby they engage mutually in the practices that the social conditions expect. As Berkenkotter (2001) points out, genres represent social cultural practices, they '... instantiate [...] structures of social and institutional relations.' (p4).

3.3.3 Genre as a Pedagogical Concern

These social and linguistic conceptualisations have led to genre being introduced as a pedagogical concern and genre awareness has developed into an important component of literacy pedagogy in primary and secondary education in, for instance, the UK (see e.g. Kingman, 1988, Gorman et. al. 1990, Beard, 2000). This grew out of the early work of Halliday et al. (e.g. 1964) and the subsequent development of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Social Semiotics, research into genre as a linguistic category as discussed above, and led to the so called 'Australian School' of literacy pedagogy. This group of researchers raised awareness of the importance of teaching genres as social processes which shape texts in particular ways to achieve particular goals. Genre literacy was seen as a means to empower students by helping them understand the social, cultural and political contexts in which genres

occur. 'Genre literacy should open students' educational and social options by giving them access to discourse of educational significance and social power'(Cope & Kalantzis, 1993:14).

Martin (1993), for instance, explores the language of particular genres; their thematic and structural organisation in developing students' understandings of how texts are organised and how their linguistic features work within the different ideological frames in which written texts are produced (e.g. Martin, 1993:16). He also distinguishes between 'big' or macro-genres and 'little', presumably, micro-genres (e.g. 1993, p.121) which in a Bakhtinian (1986) frame of reference might correspond to secondary genres (macro) and primary genres (micro) where the secondary or macro 'contains' numerous primary or micro. Of course, a micro-genre in one circumstance can become a macro-genre in another. For example a *report*, with its particular structural features (e.g. Martin, *ibid*) or its 'moves' (e.g. Swales, 1990, p.140) can appear as a micro-genre within the macro-genre of, say, a student essay, but can be a macro-genre if the whole utterance is a report. Genres work in ever decreasing (or increasing) circles of genres within genres.

Other genre analysts working in educational fields have studied genre in the context of professional textual products (e.g. Bhatia 1993) or academic writing (e.g. Swales, 1990 or Hyland, 2000). They argue, among other things, that genre awareness is crucial in understanding and participating in professional and disciplinary discourse communities and contributed greatly to English for Academic Purposes work in universities. Their work considers genre as a category which, can subsume other analytical categories to provide a practical 'thicker description' (Bhatia, 1993) of language in use than can discourse analysis alone.

In order to move towards a thicker description, discourse analysis needs a model which is rich in socio-cultural, institutional and organisational explanation, relevant and useful to language teachers and applied linguists rather than to grammatical theorists, and discriminating enough to highlight variation rather than uniformity in functional language use; [...] Also, such a model needs to be more towards the specific end of the continuum than the general end, because in language teaching for specific purposes, it is more realistic, and often desirable, to find pedagogically useful form-function correlations within, rather than across, specific genres. (Bhatia, 1993, p.11)

However this attempt to find correlations between linguistic and discourse organisation can, as Bhatia himself points out, lead to an over prescribed approach to genre pedagogy. This kind of prescriptive approach was demonstrated by a recent draft of a proposed teaching resource book on the 'grammar of genres'⁶ that I was asked to review for the publishers prior to production. In this case, while the idea was very interesting, the approach implied that genre was 'pattern imposing' (Hart, 1986, p.88, cited in Bhatia, 1993, p.40).

I realise that in the above discussion, the issue of *discourse* as a category has arisen. For the moment I do not want to discuss this but will return to it below. For now I want to continue with the category of genre and explain how I am using genre as a reference point in my own work. It will become immediately clear that my use of genre is different to those mentioned above. This is not because I disagree with those uses and interpretations of genre as

⁶ I do not want to give details of this or of the writers of the proposed book.

an analytical category. On the contrary, my ideas about genre have emerged very much from the contexts their work has established and from working with similar perspectives to theirs. Their work, for instance, has enhanced understanding about the social functions of written texts and the ways in which they work within different discourse communities. It has also highlighted the importance of understanding the structures and functions of genres in establishing, maintaining and challenging power through literacy practices. So although these issues play a fundamental role in my discussion, I have focussed my analysis differently.

I do not want to use genre as a descriptive or even explanatory (Bhatia, *ibid*) category in understanding how texts are made or what linguistic features different textual genres represent. Moreover, although I will refer to the ways in which certain genres give rise to certain linguistic choices, I do not want to see those choices as typifying a given genre in a descriptive sense. In fact, my own use of genre is to consider it, not so much as an analytic category as above, but rather as a *resource* as the following will, I hope, explain. But before I do that, I need to comment on the use of the term discourse.

3.3.4 Genre and Discourse

Theories concerning genre, particularly those I have referred to above, interweave the concept of *discourse* as an integral part of genre discussion. For instance, Hyland's (2000) book foregrounds discourse as the main focus of attention while at the same time, contextualising this theme in genre settings and at times his discussion shifts almost seamlessly from one to the other. This is understandable if we understand, as I do, genres and discourses to emerge from social-cultural practices.

Both genres and discourses provide identity to a text – they locate the text as being of a particular type (genre) within a particular community (discourse). Some genres give rise to certain discourses. For instance, the textbook, as discussed in Hyland (ibid) is a genre which, he argues, uses a pedagogic discourse typified by the relative incidence of certain linguistic resources which function at a meta-discursive level when compared to other professional academic genres. Examples include textual metadiscourse such as logical connectives and interpersonal metadiscourse such as hedges markers. (p.111).

However, there are two main points that need to be clarified about discourse for the purposes of my discussion. First of all, the term discourse needs to be teased out. On the one hand is the use associated with linguistic pragmatics (e.g. Brown & Yule, 1983) where discourse is taken to mean 'language in use', the utterances themselves as linguistic entities. On the other hand is the use associated with ideological position, power and identity and although it is associated with philosophy and sociology (e.g. Foucault, 1969/1072) it has come to be inextricably linked to theories of communication connected with, for instance, social semiotics, literacies and social linguistics (e.g. Hodge & Kress, 1988, Gee, 1999, Blommaert, 2005).

Hyland's 'discourse' as in 'disciplinary discourses' refers essentially to the linguistic features of the textual productions. However, his discussion also focuses on how these features mark out (academic) texts and their writers as belonging to and identifiable with particular social groups; specifically disciplinary communities and student-teacher (textbook writer) hierarchies. His conclusion that text book writers construct their student readers as novices derives from an analysis of the 'language as used', including the

organisation and metadiscoursal features. This places his work between these two approaches to discourse.

Secondly, and in relation to the above, a particular genre does not *necessarily* give rise to a particular discourse as is suggested in, for instance, Hyland (ibid). A play (as a genre) may have examples of a range of discourses depending on the circumstance enacted. Equally a genre such as a play may contain numerous micro-genres such as jokes, disagreements, greetings and these genres in their turn may also be positioned ideologically by their discourses (sexist jokes, ethnographic writing, mother's day greetings) and so on.

My choice in handling this terminological issue is to give each version of discourse a different referent. I will retain *discourse* for the ideological meaning while for the linguistic (or other modes) meaning I will use the term *textual materials*. This is because my analytical framework, as will be seen later, draws on a frame of reference which views communication as a cycle involving textual design, production and distribution. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001)

3.4 Genre as a Resource

In this section I will begin to explain how I am using the term genre. It will necessarily be an unfolding process which will not be completed until the end of this thesis, if then, but I will make my start here.

In a very general sense, I am using *genre* as a category which identifies the shape of a text, or rather the framing⁷ of a text. By *text* I mean that which is made in the process of communication, the material or, as Kress says, the 'stuff' of communication. It is the *semiotic product* of the interaction between the participants in a given communicative event. It has meaning, or rather meaning potential (Halliday, e.g. 1978) and if it didn't have meaning potential it wouldn't be a relevant aspect of communication because it would have nothing to do. So now we can say that *genre* is a term which identifies texts as belonging to a particular type. This definition corresponds quite closely to the one with which I began Section 3.2 above.

The idea of conceiving of genre as a resource derives from an understanding of communication as a process involving choices. By this I mean that the participants involved in any communicative event make choices about how best to express their meaning. In Multimodal terms this is expressed as 'design'. Part of the design process involves the choice (or recognition) of the generic framing of the communication. This is determined by the circumstances and the social-cultural norms associated with the situation. This corresponds to Malinowski's (1923) context of situation, developed by Halliday into a functional theory of communication. I will go into more substantive detail below but it is important to mention this now as it helps to explain why I want to consider genre as a semiotic resource rather than an analytic category used for descriptive and explanatory purposes.

Derrida (1980 / 2000) writing about the 'law of genres' complains that, 'As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established,

⁷ I do not mean 'frame' in the 'speech act' (Searle, 1969) sense and as adopted by Fairclough, 2001, Language and Power, Longman

norms and interdictions are not far behind: 'Do' or 'Do not' says 'genre' (p.221). Of course, Derrida was not complaining about genre as a concept as such but rather about the way in which genre theory had, at that time, developed into a kind of straightjacket whereby certain rules associated with certain genres had to be obeyed in order for something to be classified as belonging to a particular genre⁸.

While I do not subscribe to a 'straightjacket' approach to genre, what interests me about Derrida's remark is that it refers to genre as doing (or not doing) something. By saying 'do this' but not 'do that' it determines what resources can be chosen and hence how meanings can be produced. This is how I want to think about genre. A genre does things. It has an effect. It acts as a kind of framing which 'manages' how a text can be made. This is because, I argue, different genres have different affordances (Gibson, 1979, see below). In other words, just as Kress (2003) or Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) show that modes and media, imply, or rather are chosen for their particular affordance, I suggest that the same is true of genre. Genres are chosen because they give a particular kind of shape (or meaning potential) to a text and that 'shape' insists on making the text with a particular set of resources. For instance, in the case of a haiku genre the limitation of syllable number and thematic constraints makes the text producer do things which she would do differently were it a sonnet, or indeed, were it a less closely related genre such as a letter. This is, I suggest, because different genres require the use of different kinds of textual material, or semiotic resources and those materials in turn have their own particular effects. For instance a

⁸ This criticism has tones of the kind of comments made by Medvedev in challenging the dominance of the Formalists in early 20th Century literary debate (cited in Titunik, 1986:183) which I discuss below.

bar chart genre, as will be seen below, uses different textual materials compared to a pie chart genre and as such affords different meanings.

In this respect I want to introduce the idea of *orientation* when considering genre as I think it may help get to the kind of understanding of genre that I want to propose here. However, before that I think it is now necessary to briefly discuss *affordance* which is a term that I have used several times in this discussion so far.

3.5 About Affordance

The concept of affordance is one which is being increasingly referred to in a range of disciplinary fields as any internet search will demonstrate. The term was used by Gibson (1979, p.127) in developing an ecological approach to visual perception which locates perception in the realm of the 'meaningful environment', as opposed to simply the 'physical environment'. For Gibson, the physical environment refers to things as they are; their material, their shape and so on while the meaningful environment refers to how we perceive what things can do or provide. Moreover, the potentials we perceive depend also on our own particular circumstances including physical conditions, such as size, temporary conditions, such as need for shelter from the rain or personal conditions such as purpose or interests. In other words, he suggests that things afford particular meanings partly as a result of their physical attributes but partly as a result of how we perceive it. A tree, for instance is just what it is – a tree with particular physical properties; leaves, branches, roots etc. However a tree can be shelter, food, a play area, a

vantage point, a hiding place, a landmark and so on, depending on how we perceive the potential meanings of those physical properties.

[Objects] can all be said to have properties or qualities: color, texture, composition, size, shape and feature of shape, mass elasticity, rigidity, and mobility. Orthodox psychology asserts that *we perceive these objects insofar as we discriminate their properties or qualities*. Psychologists carry out elegant experiments in the laboratory to find out how and how well these qualities are discriminated. The psychologists assume that objects are *composed* of their qualities. But I now suggest that what we perceive when we look at objects are their affordances, not their qualities. We can discriminate the dimensions of difference if required to do so in an experiment, but what the object affords us is what we normally pay attention to. The special combination of qualities into which an object can be analyzed is ordinarily not noticed. (Gibson, 1979, p. 134)

Objects are, according to Gibson, perceived more by what they can do than by what they are composed of; in other words, their potential. And importantly it is the perceived or observed or understood potential that is relevant rather than the inherent properties. The fact that a ball is round is not the point, rather that its roundness (among other things) allows it to do the things it is best able to do – roll, spin, bounce etc. Gibson describes this as the –ableness (or not –ableness) of things relative to the 'animal' that perceives them.

If a terrestrial surface is nearly horizontal (instead of slanted), nearly flat (instead of convex or concave) and sufficiently extended (relative to the

size of the animal) and its substance is rigid (relative to the weight of the animal) then the surface *affords support* [...] It is therefore stand-on-able, permitting an upright posture for quadrupeds and bipeds. It is therefore walk-on-able and un-over-able. It is not sink-into-able like a surface of water... (ibid, p.127)

My argument is that genres can be understood in a similar way. Genres afford particular interpretive potentials (-ableness) resulting from the production opportunities (semiotic resources, modes and media) that any given genre expects. A poem draws on a different range of semiotic resources compared to a research report or a play needs different resources compared to an essay. These different resources make the communication mean in particular ways and allow for particular interpretative opportunities. The relationship between the genre and the resources it requires is, I argue, one of affordance. We choose particular genres because they let us do particular things as will be explained below.

3.6 Orientation of Genres

The idea of *orientation* as a useful concept emerged from my reading of the 1986 edition of 'Marxism and the Philosophy of Language' by Volosinov, translated and annotated by Matejka and Titunik. As Hodge and Kress (1988) point out, the (re)discovery of Volosinov, Bakhtin and Medvedev revitalised linguistic debate and their rediscovery also provides a further perspectives on social semiotics, social linguistics and discourse studies. I particularly want to consider four types of orientation in relation to genre:

contextual orientation and *thematic orientation*, which derive from the above mentioned book (Volosinov / Matejka and Titunik, 1986), and *semiotic orientation* and *discursive orientation*, which I want to introduce to further clarify how genres orient towards particular ways of meaning. While *affordance* refers to the –ableness of genres, that is, what they allow us to do, *orientation* refers to the social meaning potentials of genres, that is, how they allow us to do, and in connection with discursive orientation, how they allow us to be. I will try to explain each in turn. The separation of these orientations does not mean that they act separately. On the contrary, they act together in the making of meanings on the social (context and discourse) and material (theme and text) plane.

3.6.1 Contextual Orientation

I have already referred to the arguments of the Russian Group earlier in this chapter and highlighted their view that language (Volosinov) and genres (Medvedev & Bakhtin) need to be considered from a dual perspective in challenge to the dominant view of the time.

The actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psycho physiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances.'

(Volosinov, 1986, p.94)

This theorisation of 'language-speech' as 'social event' is important because it identifies communication as intrinsically connected to what Volosinov calls 'concrete situations' (ibid, p.95).

The forms this connection takes are different and different factors in a situation may, in association with this or that form, take on different meanings. [...] Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of this connection with a concrete situation. (ibid, p.95)

This relationship is fundamental to a social understanding of genre as it makes the crucial link between the text and the context for which it is produced, a view which has, of course, become common currency in much of the recent literature on genre, literacy and communication. It ties in strongly with the idea of contextual configuration (Hasan) mentioned above where genres emerge in order to achieve specific social interactions.

Genres emerge in response to and out of contextual circumstances and as a result orient towards those contexts. As the discussion above illustrated, even the naming of genres provides a key to the social-cultural circumstances in which they are produced. Kress (e.g. 1993) suggests that genres act as signifiers of social relations. 'In my approach I have focused not on the tasks being performed by or with the text but rather on the structural features of the specific social occasion in which the text has been produced' (p.33). These social-cultural circumstances, or contexts, situate a communicative event within a particular environment or circumstance which, in turn involves (or gives rise to) a particular set of interpersonal relationships. This is why I want to introduce the notion of discursive orientation in connection with genre.

3.6.2 Discursive Orientation

In the most simple way that I can, I want to suggest that genres configure the participants as being a particular kind of participant. In the case of the

student essay genre, as discussed in Chapter Two, the student is oriented towards a particular discursive identity which derives from the way in which the institutional interactions frame the experience. Blommaert (2005) argues that 'identities are constructed in practices that *produce, enact, or perform* [sic] identity – identity is identification, an outcome of socially conditioned semiotic work.' (p.205). However, my point is that discursive identity with regard to genre, as a semiotic resource, is not so much an outcome but rather a condition. The genre, I suggest, orients one towards a particular discursive identity. This then links closely to the issue of agency in the discussion of student writing and is a theme I will develop particularly in Chapter Five but which also features in all my analytical chapters.

3.6.3 Thematic Orientation

Thematic orientation concerns, as I have already said, the elements that combine to associate a particular text with a particular genre. 'The question posed now, regarding works of literature, was not "What is it about?" or "Why and how did it appear?" but "How is it made?" (Pomorska, 1978, p.274). Of course, here the focus is not on production in terms of semiotic resources as I am using that concept, but rather on narrative elements which typify a given genre. For instance, Propp (1978) writing in 1928 developed a system for analysing the fairy tales which identified structural and compositional features that, he argued, typified this genre. These features were broken down into 'functions of the actors', of which he identified thirty-one in all, and 'constituents' or 'elements', of which he suggested there were about one hundred and fifty. Examples of 'functions' include things like 'dispatch', 'departure', meeting obstacles or overcoming adversity. Constituent examples include things like 'the hut in the woods', food and drink, a talisman and so on.

If we ignore the overly categorical and deterministic perspective that Propp offers with his attention to counting and regulation, this can be useful if we turn it away from description of what genres 'contain' to what genres do. As Martin (1993) points out genres 'achieve their social purpose' (p.121) by structuring information in the particular ways that have developed in expressing particular kinds of meaning. So in this case, there is a link between the thematic features and the purposes for which they came about in that particular way. This parallels Hasan's (1989) discussion on contextual configuration whereby the thematic structure of a text identifies it as belong to a particular genre. Particular conversational gambits typify particular social encounters (or genres) which both reflect and promote the shape of the interaction.

Of course, this kind of approach is rightly criticised for its tendency towards a mechanical representation of genre as comprising a series of components assembled to produce a particular type of text. This was precisely the criticism that Medvedev directed at the Formalists (Titunik, 1986:183) and is a criticism that can be made about genre as a pedagogical category, particularly when the idea of 'features' of a genre (i.e. what it looks like) is taken as the sole approach to the shaping of texts.

Nevertheless, despite these reservations, there is much to be learned from considering the thematic features of genre particularly from the perspective of their semiotic affordances. In my own study, the thematic features of the genres used (essays, plays, radio phone-in, children's expository text) push the writers into constructing their meanings in particular ways in similar ways that the elements identified by Propp (ibid) enforce particular ways of meaning making in fairy tales.

For example, thematic features of an essay include 'introduction, development, conclusion' structure, which forces a particular way of shaping the information being expressed. To achieve this it is necessary to provide paragraphs and sentences which further shape the meaning. There are particular 'functions', to use Propp's term, such as 'naming the topic', 'ascertaining the context and relevance', 'linking to evidence' and so on and certain 'elements' such as references to other writers, use of particular terms, grammatical choices that typify the genre. Each phase has particular meaning potential within its generic frame and needs the participants to be familiar with those meanings if the genre is to succeed in being the most apt choice for the job in hand.

This brings us finally to my fourth orientation, semiotic orientation.

3.6.4 Semiotic Orientation

It may seem as if the previous orientations are all semiotic, and in fact, of course, they are if we understand genre itself to be a semiotic resource. However, I want to use the term here in order to highlight the materiality of genres. I will develop this idea in more detail below when discussing why I am using multimodal terms of reference but for the moment I want to say that genres orient not only towards particular contexts or thematic organisation or discursive identity but they also orient towards particular ways of meaning with particular materials, modes and media. Semiotic orientation concerns, then, the material resources made available by genre itself; the materials with which the communication is produced; that is resources such as grammar and vocabulary (textual materials), or speech, writing and actions (modes), or paper, ink, vocal chords (media).

The following sections will attempt to clarify this by suggesting a theorisation of what I am calling communicative flow.

3.7 Communicative Flow – a multimodal perspective

In this section I will propose a theoretical framework which sets out a representation of what I call communicative flow. This is to underpin my discussions about genre as a resource and to foreground my discussion in later chapters where I consider the effects of genre choice on the meanings that the student writers were enabled to make as a consequence.

I understand communicative practice as a process of interactions whereby meanings are made, exchanged and remade within the given circumstances in which a communicative event occurs. In Chapter Two, I displayed a chart representing interactions between students and teachers engaged in the institutional practice of assignments and essay writing where I drew on terminology deriving from Kress and Van Leeuwen's work on multimodal discourse. I now want to develop this idea to explore what I call *communicative flow* where meanings are made and remade in the process of communicative exchange. In this discussion I will suggest that communication involves a particular circumstance or set of circumstances which lead to the need to communicate some kind of information (the message) to someone for some reason or other. In order to do that the 'communicator' makes certain choices about what materials to use in the making of the message based on suppositions regarding what will express the intended meaning in the most appropriate or relevant way within the given circumstances.

3.7.1 Why A Multimodal Frame of Reference

Before moving further, there may be a question about why I am using a multimodal frame of reference given that the data I am considering is entirely produced with writing. However, I hope that I can justify this decision in the following.

A multimodal perspective considers the 'material' with which a communication is 'made' and what that material achieves in terms of its aptness to the communication in hand (affordance). Through talking about the material resources that combine to produce a communicative event it is possible to further unravel what that communication entails.

The term multimodal as understood by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) suggests that meaning is conveyed and interpreted through a range of different resources. By resources I mean the elements which combine to make the communication. These can be divided into four categories: *genres* which establish the 'shape' of the communication as already discussed above and which can be considered as the contextual or framing resource, *modes*, which refer to the manner in which the communication is articulated (speech, writing, schema, gesture, etc.), *textual materials* (grammar, lexis, choreographic moves, etc.) with which the communication is made and finally *media* which are the channels used in the articulation (or distribution) of the text.

The process of communication, that is, the exchange of meanings between participants, involves a process of transformation. This transformation is brought about by the interactions between the participants concerned in the communication and the *resources* with which they choose to articulate their meanings.

Let me take as an example, the communication of statistical information. One would need to take into account the what kind of information it was (e.g. proportions, comparisons, fluctuations etc.) in choosing the most apt means with which to communicate the information. So, for the purposes of illustration let's say that the statistical information concerns the proportion of males to females in some given situation – say teaching.

That information can be communicated in a variety of different ways; verbally, numerically, figuratively; orally, visually, with objects or actions; and so on. And these modes themselves draw on resources which combine to produce particular effects. Verbal communication (speech and writing) uses syntactic structures, (e.g. transitivity and mood, directness and indirectness), lexis (e.g. metaphor, connotation etc), prosody (e.g. voice pitch, intonation, punctuation) and textual organisation (e.g. foregrounding and backgrounding, sequencing etc.). Figurative communication⁹ might draw on colour, spatial arrangement, texture.

The statistician could be writing a government report or an academic article and state that '*60% of teachers are women*' (leaving the inference that 40% are male). Or, in a pub argument she could say '*sixty percent of teachers ARE women*' using her voice to stress the word 'are' possibly retorting to disagreement. In a report or a lecture she could choose a diagram, a histogram for example, which employs a variety of representational modes (numbers, words, colours, graphics) arranged in a particular spatial order and which all convey a particular set of meanings.

⁹ I use this term to avoid the problem of 'visual' since writing is also 'visual'. Here I mean images that depict the thing they symbolise or mean, though, of course, diagrams and non-figurative art are as symbolic as writing arguably is.

Here (Figure 3.1), for instance, the colours chosen convey special (cultural) meaning – pink for girls and blue for boys in certain cultural settings:

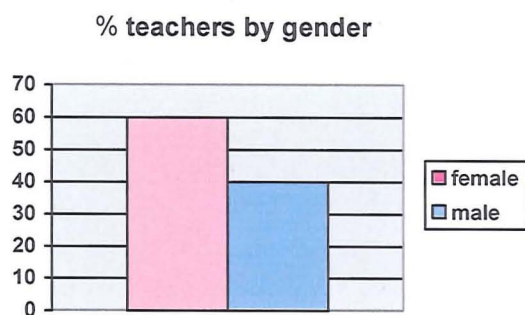


Figure 3.1

Or she could choose to reverse the colours to subvert the cultural meanings associated with them.

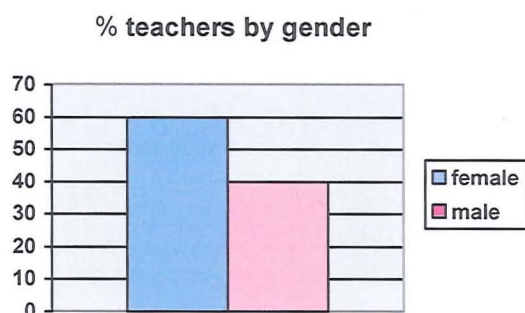


Figure 3.2

She might choose a different diagrammatic genre with a different spatial arrangement – let's say a pie chart and in this case, a pie chart which has not numerical representation of the different percentages. Perhaps this is because the specific topological representation conveys proportion more effectively in the pie chart than it does in the vertical arrangement of the histogram.

teachers by gender

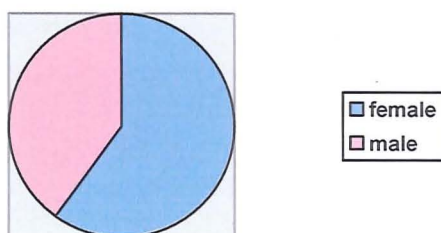


Figure 3.3

In each case different resources are used to convey the same piece of information. However, in each case the choice of resources (genres, modes, textual materials and media) acts on the information itself and influences the way in which it means and in which it can be understood.

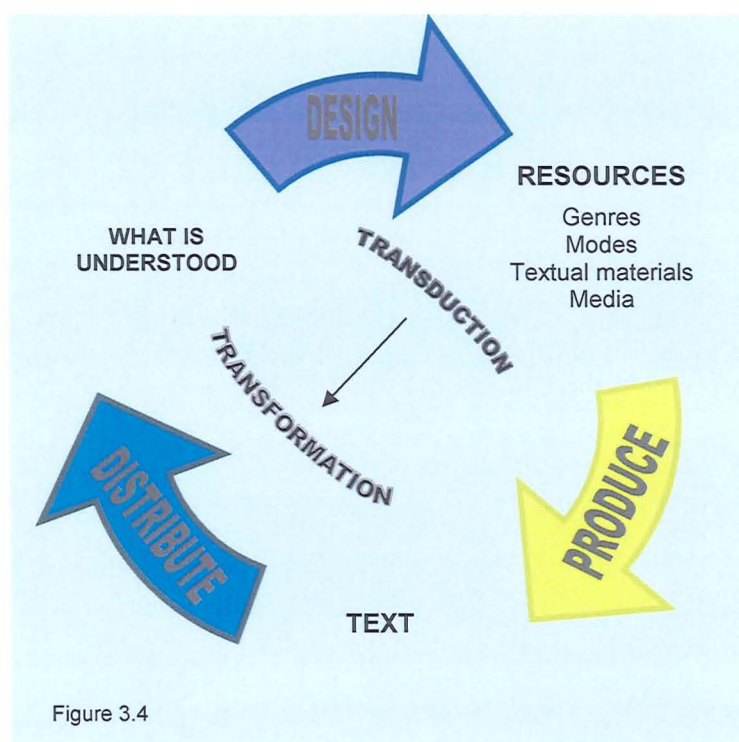
Why the producer of the text chooses this or that genre and these or those modes or textual resources and this or that medium depends on what she considers to be most apt to the communicative event. And this, of course, depends on the circumstances, the purposes, the motivations and expectations of the participants, institutional practices, cultural meanings and so on. In each case, the different materials afford different communicative possibilities.

Of course, those involved in the communication need to be 'ready' to understand the intended meaning – they need to know, for instance, that voice tone or force indicates emphasis or that using blue to represent women is a subversion. These are not necessarily universally shared; different languages use tone for different purposes, different cultures value gender differently and may not associate specific colours with gender. An 'unready' participant may make different interpretations based on their own knowledge background (culture, history, environment, etc.) Kress & Van

Leeuwen (2001) provide some examples of this in their comparison of French and British magazines.

To sum up, different communicative events suggest different genres, these in turn suggest different modes and the latter can only be selected if the necessary media are available. If there is no pen and paper then a pie chart or a written text are difficult to achieve. If you have 'lost your voice' you can't have much of a conversation in the pub.

Figure 3.4 is a schematic depiction which attempts to represent the processes



The aim is to suggest a cyclical process whereby the participants (present or absent) express, interpret and act in response to and depending on the resources used in producing the text, thereby continuing the cycle. There is a movement from the social to the material and then back again to the social as the participants interact in the flow of making communication.

The communicative event is determined by the purpose and the socio-cultural context in which the communication is 'required' or 'desired'. This then leads the 'communicator' to consider (or design) what she or he considers to be the most apt way to convey her meaning. This design phase leads her to choose certain material resources whose affordances seem to fit the communicative purpose resulting in a particular communicative 'entity' (or product). The product of these resource choices can be considered as the 'information'. The communication is delivered (or distributed) through whatever channel has been selected for the purpose and is then interpreted (or remade) by the participant(s) who are sharing in the making of the communicative event as a whole. In fact, there is a constant making and making / remaking whereby communicative flow is achieved. It does not matter whether participants are present and visible or whatever channel the communication chooses. Every act of communication involves this kind of cyclical process. The interactions suggested by the diagram do not need to correspond in terms of resources selected one to the other, although it is likely that the genre will remain the same as the genre reflects the social context itself. A spoken utterance (e.g. a request) can be responded to with an action which in turn could be responded to with another action or a gesture or a verbal utterance or nothing at all. Each of these choices carries meaning and is available for interpretive remaking by whoever is involved (or even circumstantially involved) in the communicative event.

The concepts of transduction and transformation (Kress 2002) refer to the process that occurs when there is a shift in mode, for example from thought to expression or from expression in one mode (say speech) to a different mode (say gesture). This process of transduction results in a transformation in how the information means and can be compared to discussions of phase

transitions that take place in Physics research. I will exemplify this more fully in Chapter Six.

Furthermore, the response does not necessarily have to be immediate as is the case with written language (although messaging and 'chat' is an interesting site to consider the role of written language in this hybrid communicative space). By contrast, in spoken communication or communication where relevant participants are 'present', the response is more likely to be immediate. This reflects Bakhtin's (1986 p.68) critique of the 'fictions' of 'listener' and 'understander' and conceptualisations of 'unified speech flow' in that it suggests a strongly dynamic interaction that is affected not only by the act of uttering itself but importantly framed by the context, here denoted as environment, circumstances and participants and all these imply in terms of multiple co-texts.

The next chapter will explain the framework with which I analyse the texts before proceeding to examining the texts themselves in the subsequent chapters. The advantage of analysing my own data in this way is that it allows for an unpacking of the different elements that are involved in the communication in hand. Since I want to consider how a change in genre afforded the writers different opportunities in their (re)construction of the knowledge/information represented by the original essays I need to consider the ways in which these different genres allowed or rather insisted on specific constituent elements that differed from the original essay versions.

Chapter Four - Analytical Framework: a kind of method

As events unfold we discover that our nascent formulations match and mismatch in curious ways with the data we pursue in order to explore those investigations. The dialectical struggle to find ways of generating data significant for our formulations and to then reconcile that data with those formulations can lead to manifold discoveries of new kinds of data, new kinds of claims, new issues to investigate and new methods of investigation. We do not know what we will find, and what we will be led to say by what we find. Although we need issues, assumptions, methods, hypotheses to drive our discovery process, we must be ready to accept the worlds revealed to us in our attempt to come to terms with what we discover. Otherwise, we may throw away our most promising stories. (Bazerman, 1988, p.331)

4.1 Introduction

In his book, *Shaping Written Knowledge*, from which I have taken the above extract, Bazerman encapsulates one of the core problems of writing about research. In an attempt also to reflect this, I have subtitled this chapter 'a kind of method' in the hope that this will go some way towards highlighting the way in which my analysis has come about. As I have already made clear in earlier chapters, the work under discussion and the ideas presented have emerged through the course of experience and analysis. I am sure I am no different from anyone else in this respect. In my particular case, as I have also already mentioned, I did not set out to investigate the themes that have emerged and will continue to emerge in this work. The data for the study came about serendipitously and it was this data which led me to consider the

themes that I have been developing. Of course, this is not to say that I am merely a hapless participant or that I 'fell into' the present research entirely by chance. In fact it is a continuation of my extensive working experience in the fields of language, language education and social linguistics. 'Getting' the data arose from events that I myself set in train through teaching the kinds of things I teach, so perhaps it was not entirely serendipitous. However, having 'got' the data and having realised how rich it was, I knew that I had to do something with it in order to be able to talk about it in ways that would, perhaps, add insight into the relationship between writing, on the one hand, and knowledge, identity and agency on the other hand. These are issues that have been at the centre of recent discussions concerning academic literacies as discussed in Chapters One and Two.

As has also been well documented in the substantial amount of literature on scientific research writing (e.g. Bourdieu, 2004, Gilbert & Mulkay, 198/2003, Bazerman, 1988, Medawar, 1964) there is a process whereby the writing of scientific research erases the experiences involved in undertaking that research. This is also evident in most professional academic writing, regardless of whether it is 'scientific' or not, where event (data, findings, discussion) tends to be foregrounded over process (how data was acquired, how many attempts were involved in analysis and so on). As the physicist Richard Feynman pointed out in his 1966 Nobel lecture, 'there isn't any place to publish in a dignified manner what you actually did in order to do the work'. (cited in Tobin, 1999). This is a theme I will be picking up in Chapter Seven which discusses the ways in which different genres afford (or not) the opportunity to discuss 'what you actually did'. I mention it here, to preface my own attempts to offer a coherent 'methodological' discussion of how I worked with the data in hand rather than a narrative account of all the highways and byways that I went along to arrive at this analytical

framework. In the process I will, I'm afraid, be theorising again as in the previous chapter. This is the enactment of Bazerman's argument (above), that 'we must be ready to accept the worlds revealed to us in our attempt to come to terms with what we discover.', and because I don't want to 'throw away' the more 'promising' of my stories.

This Chapter, then, will serve as a link between the theoretical considerations of the previous chapter and the analysis of the data itself in Chapters Five to Seven. I will explain my terms of reference and justify the ways in which I am using those terms. I will then introduce the analytical framework which I have developed as a means for identifying and talking about the different effects the regenring produced and the ways in which these effects reveal the effects of conventional essay genres. In other words, the framework is intended to reveal what is usually hidden in its 'taken for granted-ness'. I will also discuss the way in which I use the interviews with my students to help bridge the gap between my own 'readings' of their work and their reflections on doing the work itself. But before I do any of that I must introduce the work itself and in so doing I will need to step outside the flow of this chapter by inserting a kind of chapter within a chapter. I apologise for the awkwardness of this organisational ploy, but I feel that this is the most practical way to proceed.

4.2 The Student Productions

Up till now I have referred to the idea of regenring as if it were an unproblematic concept. So before continuing I need to clarify what I mean.

When I use the term *genre* in connection with my data, I am referring to genre as the overarching frame of a text which gives rise to how it can mean (its meaning potential) and how it can be produced (semiotic resources). I mean 'big' genres corresponding to what Bakhtin (1986,p.62) called 'secondary', or 'complex', genres as opposed to 'little' genres, in other words, 'primary' or 'simple' genres, which concern 'everyday utterances' Bakhtin, *ibid*).

When I talk about *regenring* I mean turning a text which has been produced using one 'big' genre (i.e. a student essay) into a text using a different genre (i.e. *not* a student essay). And when I talk about *genre shift*, I mean the effect that regenring has on the textual product and the textual producer.

The original essays on which the regenred versions were based were all part of the first year undergraduate portfolio of work in different disciplines; politics, anthropology, economics, African linguistics and religious studies. All dealt with key debates in the respective disciplinary fields; history of political systems, anthropological methodologies, opposing economic theories, origins and sources of Swahili, phenomenology as a methodology.

All were well received by their subject tutors in that they were considered appropriate to the expected essay outcomes, and two had been considered extremely successful. This is despite the feelings reported by the students themselves who felt that their work was disappointing, more from the experience of the process than from what they had learned from doing it.

The summaries I provide are necessarily brief and cannot possibly to justice to the what the students produced. Moreover, it is not my purpose to deal fully with other aspects that emerge such as the essay questions themselves

or how the students chose to interpret them. I have touched on some of these issues in the course of describing the work, but my main purpose is to introduce the 'plots', so to speak, of the work itself.

I will take each pair of productions in turn (full texts are available as appendices 4.1 – 4.6) starting with the original essays and moving onto the regenred productions. I will provide a basic interpretation of the essay questions themselves as I feel it important in understanding how the students actually responded to them.¹ I will then summarise the ways in which the students recontextualised their essayist discussions in the genres that they chose.

4.2.1 A Comment about the Genres Chosen

I have already provided a detailed discussion on how I am using the term genres and I do not intend to repeat myself. However, I want to point out that the regenred work can be divided into two categories. These are not genre categories as such, but categories which distinguish what I am calling imagined or *as if* genres and those which are authentic or *as* genres. This is something that I have recently come to realise, although perhaps it should have been obvious from the start, and it is something that might deserve a deeper analysis on a different occasion. By *as if* genres I mean genres where the students produced their work in a social setting other than that of producing academic knowledge. These included a tabloid type newspaper report, a radio phone-in and an expository 'article' for younger readers. In these cases, the students imagined specific social environments for their work. They weren't actually what they appeared to be. The newspaper

¹ See Fiona English (most recent version 2006) *A handbook for university study*, which exists as an institutional publication and which sets out and explains the analytical approach I use here.

report was not a *real* newspaper report nor was the radio phone-in a *real* radio phone-in. By contrast two of the productions were *as* genres in that they were not placed in imagined circumstances. They were both plays in their own right and their circumstances were solely to do with the material itself. Further analysis might reveal something interesting about the differences in the effects of these different categories of regenring, for instance issues of discursive identity a theme that I consider in Chapter Five.

4.3 The Students' Work

4.3.1 Peter's Work

The essay

The original essay came from Peter's Swahili unit as part of his first year programme in African Studies. The title for the essay was:

From a set of Swahili loan words, establish the linguistic source of each word and suggest the probable period from when it was borrowed.

The essay title is presented as an apparently unproblematic request to achieve three main goals:

- (choose) a set of Swahili loan words,
- establish their linguistic source,
- suggest the probable period from when it was borrowed

In this context, the *disciplinary topic* is loan words. This is what the essay is 'about' while the *limitation* to that topic is Swahili. In other words, the disciplinary preoccupation here is the issue of loan words – a generalisable concept – while the 'site' for discussing this concept is the language Swahili.

The tasks that the student is expected to fulfil here are either implied (choose ...) or explicitly stated (establish ... and suggest ...).

The assumptions underlying the assignment task relate both to the instruction wording,

- Swahili has loan words
- they have different linguistic sources
- there is a relationship between the linguistic source and historical events.

and to what has presumably been discussed on the course itself – the things you are supposed to know about if you've attended the course and done the reading. (examples of loan words, discussions of linguistic sources and the historical circumstances under which the words entered the language).

There is no indication in the question, however, about whether any contentions need to be addressed. To the 'naked' eye – that is the eye of someone who hasn't done that course – there is nothing to suggest that there might be any argument about these loan words and their linguistic and historical origins. The only possible indicator might be in the use of the word 'probable' though this could equally relate to the uncertainty that might exist regarding moments of interlingual contact. As someone with some knowledge of sociolinguistics, I know that there is debate about

language contact, though I can have no knowledge of whether this played a part in the Swahili course at SOAS.

Peter's essay fulfils the instruction demands in that he provides a general reference to the topic of loan words and later clarifies the linguistic conditions under which loan words are retained or not. He specifies Swahili as the site of his discussion, noting that it is itself a lingua franca, and then proceeds to offer a chronological account of the different waves of foreign visitors from certain regions and their different languages. For each wave he provides examples of modern Swahili words whose origin stems from these other languages and gives examples of their derivational process. The whole essay reads as a history of language contact in a specific region and focuses mainly, though not only, on lexical borrowings. It is framed with an introduction which challenges assumptions about language purity and a conclusion which challenges assumptions about the 'bastardisation' of languages. These aspects of the writing go beyond the instructions provided, though they may have been part of the implicit demand to make reference to issues involved in sociolinguistic debates about language contact mentioned above.

The Rewrite – 'Swahili Loan Words'

The rewrite that Peter chose to do involved refocusing the essay rendering it suitable for a younger readership. He retains the organisational structure of the original and deals with the same themes in the same sequence. The main differences, as will be seen in Chapter Five, relate, not so much to what was said but how it was said and within what context. This alternative version had a major impact of the sense of authorial agency.

4.3.2 Saskia's Work

The Essay

Like Peter, above, Saskia was following the African Studies programme and equally chose an essay on Swahili to rewrite in a different genre. Her essay title was as follows:

Give an account of the origin and present day function of one
African lingua franca.

The title is more open than the one Peter chose in that it leaves the student to select a language, provided it is a 'lingua franca' though it too contains a historical dimension. In this case the separate tasks required are implied rather than stated as was the case in the previous example:

- (choose) an African lingua franca
- give an account of its origin
- give an account of its present day function
- what is a lingua franca? (implicit in the process of completing the tasks themselves)

From the disciplinary perspective the topic is 'lingua francas' while the specific limitation is an 'African' one. There is, therefore, an implicit expectation that the concept of 'lingua franca' will be explained in some way. In other words, before you can 'choose' a lingua franca you have to know what a lingua franca is. This is also crucial for the discussion of its origin and its present day function. Additionally, the student is being instructed to focus on the origins and the present uses of the lingua franca. The difficulty, for an outsider, is in understanding whether 'origins' is intended from a linguistic perspective or from a historical perspective. Saskia chose the

historical interpretation, a decision I cannot comment on as I did not attend the unit so do not know how appropriate this was. However the linkage of 'origins' to 'present day' implies a kind of chronological perspective so it can be assumed that Saskia chose rightly.

The essay itself is organised around a sequence of topic oriented paragraphs. Each paragraph deals with a new, almost stand alone, thematic aspect, encyclopaedic in style, about firstly the origins and secondly the functions of Swahili. In this sense she is addressing the instruction in a literal sense rather than dealing with the implied instruction – to describe what a lingua franca is using a specific example to illustrate the discussion. The topics covered can be listed in sequence, each topic corresponding to a new paragraph:

- the linguistic origins
- socio-historical origins
- geographical origins and spread
- colonial impact
- written form
- resistance to its spread
- regional variation in form and function
- number of speakers and spread
- standardised variety
- competition with English in certain countries and regional dialects.

This brings her to a kind of case study of Tanzania which she uses to consider the present day functions of the language, in different domains (my term not hers), as part of a wider linguistic repertoire and code switching. She completes the essay with a paragraph which attempts to draw this all

together concluding with a valedictory comment about the robustness of Swahili in continuing to grow in importance despite the dominance of English globally.

The Rewrite 'Culturally Confused'

For the rewrite, Saskia chose to render the 'content' of the essay accessible for a younger audience for much the same reasons as Peter above. She felt that the topic leant itself to be 'told' rather than 'written' and so decided to reproduce the essay as a dramatised narration presenting a parent telling a bedtime 'story' to his two children aged eight or nine. In this setting, the information from the essay is more selective and contextualised into a discussion as well as an exposition. The device that enables Saskia to achieve this effect is that the parent (in this case the father), who is described as 'politically correct to the extreme', uses the 'bedtime story' slot as an educational opportunity. Saskia's own written reflection regarding this process is as follows: *'...by recrafting my existing essay I am given the opportunity to become more fluid with the concepts presented in it.'*

In summary the play offers a very detailed set of stage management instructions regarding the participants, their attitudes, behaviours and functions and the set itself including the type of clothes worn by the parent. Despite Saskia's assertions to the contrary (e.g. *The set is not of immediate significance...*) in fact this detail of the set contextualises the attitudes and personalities of the family set up, the conceit that allows for the retelling of the essay in this way. The recrafted (as Saskia puts it) essay incorporates many of the original topics although in this case they are put to use as a result of the demands of the dialogue of the dramatisation, the to-ing and fro-ing of banter between the children and the parent. Rather than the listing outlined above, the 'facts' are linked to the children's own knowledge and

experience. The information is now grounded in a 'real world' context where things need to be explained rather than announced. The somewhat earnest goal of the parent and the children's reaction to this offer additional opportunities for reflection as will be seen in Chapter Seven.

4.3.3 Assif's Work

The Essay

Assif's essay came from the unit 'An introduction to economic analysis' as part of his BSc Economics. The essay is titled 'Interest Rates Determinants' and is followed by the following abstract. I do not have the actual question as set out by the course convenor, but the abstract provided by Assif seems to represent an unpicking of the essay task. It goes as follows:

'The rate of interest is a real phenomenon, determined by the twin forces of thrift and productivity.'

'The rate of interest is a monetary phenomenon, determined by the interaction between the supply of and the demand for money.'

I will try to explain to which schools of economic thought these two statements belong to, respectively.

I will then explain the main points about each theory, also stating the implications of both views for the ability of the economy to maintain full employment equilibrium.

As with the other essay assignments this one is also invites students to deal with a key disciplinary concern, in this case the opposing theoretical stances represented in the two quotations identified in the essay as respectively, Adam Smith and Meynard Keynes. The site for the discussion, the

limitation, is 'interest rate determinants' and the student tasks are, as expressed by Assif, to:

- explain the competing theories
- use the topic of interest rate determinants as the context for the explanation

The essay more or less follows the structure suggested by Assif's abstract, moving from 'classical theory' to 'keynsian theory'. However, he integrates the discussion of 'interest rates determinants' into the discussion of each of the two theories. The essay provides an exposition of Classical theory and its understanding of interest rates determinants and then moves into an oppositional account of Keynesian theory on the same topic, contrasting this in an argument, with the classical position. As this is an economics theory essay, Assif employs numerical and graphic representations of equations to express the respective theories, but these are also interpreted verbally. The essay is both an account of as well as an argument but one which does not proffer much in the way of 'siding with' one or the other.

The Rewrite – A radio debate between Milton Freedman and JM Keynes

Assif's decision to present this essay as a radio discussion on the topic of Interest Rate Determinants gave him the opportunity to present the information from the essay, which was essentially an argument between opposing political as well as economic points of view, in a naturally argumentative context. The radio debate conceit allowed him to put two proponents of the respective theories in direct opposition as in a debate. However, rather than have Adam Smith – who was referred to in the essay, Assif chose instead another modern day classical economist, Milton

Freedman, to represent that particular point of view even though Freedman does not appear at all in the essay.

The radio programme is hosted and has members of the public phoning in questions after each of the guests has presented a three minute presentation of their argument. In this way, Assif covers the content of the essay through the presentations and through the phoned in questions. There is a hiatus mid programme, where the guests have the chance to face each other out and part way through the presentations there is a moment of antagonism, highlighting the contention.

4.3.4 Andy's Work

The Essay

Once again, the essay that Andy chose to redesign relates to a key aspect of the study of politics, namely that of the classification of political systems. The essay title was:

Discuss some of the different methods of classifying political systems with their advantages and disadvantages

The essay task invites the student to select from among a variety of methods (discuss *some* of the ...), though it might be clear from the course which methods that 'some' refers to. It also insists on an evaluation of those methods, though again, it is important for the student to know whose evaluations are anticipated. This is true of all assignments which require 'evaluation'. How free is a student to really evaluate themselves?

Andy's essay selects the models of two influential political theorists, Aristotle and Montesquieu, offering these as examples of the ways in which political systems can, and have been classified. He also uses them as a means to discuss the weaknesses of such classificatory systems, with particular reference to the approach, deductive (Aristotle) vs. inductive (Montesquieu), historical change and historical relevance. He then moves on to discuss more generally the difficulties of attempting to classify systems, citing various commentators, until he introduces a theorist whose model seems, to Andy, the most useful. The essay is framed within a problematisation of the topic, attempts to provide classification models, and a conclusion which offers a preference, but one which is open and flexible.

The Rewrite – Classified!

The genre chosen by Alex is the newspaper article, or more accurately report. It attempts to replicate the kind of approach to be found in the tabloid newspapers with hyperbole, scandal and action. Andy represents himself as the reporter and the setting is an 'international time-travelling conference of political philosophers and theorists' held in th century Athens. The reporter interweaves his report of what the different speakers, those referenced in the essay, with journalistic commentary which is how he provides his own evaluations alongside those of the political commentators used in the essay. In much the same way as Assif's rewrite, above, put the exponents of particular points of view in direct contact, so does Andy with his cited sources. The conference delegates are those referred to in the essay and he, the reporter, links the ideas to the critiques offered by the various commentators. In this way there is a direct connection between the 'philosophers' and the 'theorists' where their own opinions and actions interact as if they were actually there together.

4.3.5 Anya's Work

The Essay

The essay was from a particular unit on Anya's Social Anthropology course, 'Voice and Place'. This is a programme where the lecturers talk about their own research practices and activities to contextualise and exemplify anthropological research methods. Each week a different lecturer talks about his or her own current work and links it to the theoretical and methodological frameworks typical in this discipline. Anya chose an essay question linked to the session on anthropology of the built environment.

How might anthropological considerations of the built environment lead to better understandings of issues such as social status, identity construction and nationalism?

The assignment is explicitly posed as a question about the disciplinary topic 'anthropological considerations' which in the context of the course can be interpreted as analytical or methodological foci. The discussion is then limited to the site of the 'built environment' with the aim of drawing out some of the big disciplinary preoccupations: social status, identity construction and nationalism. It is a hard task to deal with such big themes in a two thousand word first year first term essay! Unlike the two essays outlined above, this one goes to the core debate in the discipline itself – the value and relevance of the anthropological approach (considerations?) – as opposed to the less all encompassing demands of the linguistics essays which focused on one particular aspect of linguistics.

If we break the 'question' down into tasks, as I have done above, to try to penetrate what the question demands, we end up with the following which are in the main implicit:

- explain the usefulness of 'anthropological considerations'
- test out these 'considerations' in the context of the 'built environment'
- decide whether doing this leads to a better understanding of anthropological issues such as...

Even more implicit is whether there is also a requirement to explain what is understood by 'anthropological considerations' and who it is understood by (the student herself? anthropologists themselves?). And is there a need to define the concept of the 'built environment' in itself a disciplinised term? And finally, does the student need to write about all the 'issues' or choose amongst them? Does she need to explain how these issues are meant in anthropology as opposed to more common sense understandings? In fact, although the question is posed as a direct question, what it demands is quite embedded.

The essay itself covers all the themes suggested in the question, but adds also the other big issue, that of gender. The discussion is framed within the debate about the value of ethnographic study (anthropological considerations) in understanding different contexts – in this case the built environment. The essay moves along taking each topic in turn considering it with examples from reading (citations and quotes) and from the lectures. It begins with discussion of the domestic space with reference to different types of housing and their meanings, then moves onto the workspace and the design and purposes within changing societies. It proceeds to consider

the role of architecture and design in the construction of environments in different cultural and social settings (traditional, industrialised and post industrialised). It contrasts urban space with 'savage' or forest environments, particularly from the perspectives of social identity and the construction of the other before moving onto a discussion of tradition and built environments and their preservation or otherwise – citing Sa'ana, Djenn and Istanbul as examples. A discussion of the role of monumental architecture in the construction and preservation of national identity follows leading to the overall conclusion that such considerations – i.e. from an anthropological perspective are helpful in discussing the built environment.

Its structure and approach is quite different from the previous two examples (Peter and Saskia) particularly in its use of cited resources in the development of the discussion. The two sets of work already discussed make little use of references, drawing on them mainly as sources of information. Anya's essay, by contrast, uses them both as information and as argument.

The Rewrite - 'Snails and Other Gastropods'

Anya chose to write a play in eight acts, presented as a quest where a protagonist journeys through space and time encountering other characters on the way. Adventures happen, experiences are had, lessons are learned and the quest is successfully accomplished.

The play tells the story of Boris, an intergalactic snail, who has been referred by a careers advisor to try out being an anthropologist to see if he'd like that kind of work. The 'snail' metaphor clearly has a strong resonance in the discussion of the built environment. He is sent to Earth, more precisely SOAS, glossed as Save Our Anthropological Souls, where he is given the

assignment (How might anthropological considerations....?) and sets off on his quest to find the answer to the question. In this case, instead of using the library or attending the lectures, he engages in an ethnographic study of the built environment – and indeed the environment in which he finds himself. He wanders around London, meeting people who have issues relating to social status, identity, nationalism and gender, all of whom join him in his quest, in common with most 'questing' narratives. They become a community themselves, travelling eventually to Yemen to observe the research of the lecturer whose talk inspired Anya to choose the essay in the first place. Other devices are used to bring in the professional anthropologists; an internet café and an on-line discussion with the key writers on the issues within the 'built environment' context. In true quest style, the story ends with Boris and his band of friends realising that they had everything they needed all along – they had the answer to the question only they just didn't realise it. And maybe the question was different to what they had understood in the first place.

4.3.6 Dan's Work

The Essay

Dan's essay was chosen from his Introduction to the Study of Religions unit as part of his Religious Studies BA. The question under consideration, in his case was:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a 'phenomenological' approach to religion?

One again, the pattern of setting assignments which encourage students to consider a disciplinary issue within the context of a specific field is evident here. In this case the student is asked to evaluate a particular theoretical

perspective, 'phenomenology'. In itself, the task is enormous and requires an analysis of the theory itself as well as its value or otherwise in understanding the even bigger concept of 'religion'.

The task itself implicitly demands the student to demonstrate an understanding of what he understands by 'phenomenology' since without doing so he cannot possibly evaluate it in the context of the study of religions. Also implicit in the question is that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in applying this approach and these need to be identified. However, there is no apparent preference suggested one way or another. Presumably the course content has raised this as an issue for consideration and it is up to the student to interpret this from what he has understood.

Dan's approach to the task was to provide a lengthy (the tutor indicated that it was, in fact too long) and detailed overview of the literature relating to the topic and in so doing provides elucidation on both the meaning of this approach – what it is – and an evaluation of its usefulness as a methodology. He uses the work of different theorists, both proponents and critics, to explain the approach following a kind of chronology of the methodology from its inception until the present day. The essay is framed by the 'teachings' of his own religious faith (e.g. the Bhagavad-gita) which he employs to highlight the paradoxes involved in attempts to separate the self from the object of study. The experience of reading the essay is one of enlightenment through having been taken through a thorough exposition and evaluation of the field.

The Rewrite – What are the advantages and disadvantages of a 'phenomenological' approach to religion?

Dan, like others, chose a dramatised approach to represent his essay. It is a kind of play set in some distant future described as a 'golden age' fitting, perhaps, to his own philosophical desires; a 'God-centred' utopia where 'the highest truth is that of reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all'. The conceit is of a student engaged in the final stages of his education who is required to embark on an essay evaluating 20th century understandings of 'religion' with specific reference to 'phenomenology'. As with Anya above, he re-enacts the research process that was necessary for the original essay. There are two main characters, the student, Josh, and a speaking computer very much in the mould of science fiction constructs such as HAL in the film '2001'. The computer provides the information required for the essay and the student provides the questions, interpretations and evaluations of that information, although, at times, the computer is drawn into an evaluation based on the critical sources being used. Many of the various writers referred to in the essay are evoked as holograms to 'speak' their own words although Dan does not use them to directly engage with. They exist merely as an embodiment of the ideas, a bit of fun, as the computer suggests, rather than as interactive participants in a discussion. The discussion follows the line of a 'teacher' (the computer) and a 'student', perhaps reflecting a kind of disciple – master relationship.

Final Remark

I have not been able to do justice to the work in these brief summaries. This can only be achieved through a reading of the productions themselves (See Appendices). Suffice it to say for now that the range of possibility afforded

by the new productions resulted in both more and less than the sum of the parts of the original essays.

4.4 Focussing the Analysis

The initial process with which I analysed the data involved interaction between my own reading of what the students wrote and their comments on what they had written. This corresponds to the 'kind of method', I refer to in the title to this chapter and is part of the process through which I developed my ideas and the framework with which I discuss the written productions.

I read the regenerated work along with the original essays and then decided to interview² those of the students who were still around³ to see if I could learn more about their experiences of undertaking the work. I have already threaded several of their comments throughout this thesis because their views and ideas offer great insight into student experience of university study. During the interviews the students developed what I consider to be very sophisticated ideas that neither they nor I might have arrived at had we not embarked on the process. This, of course, may be one of the affordances of the interview genre, particularly in relation to research as it foregrounds issues that tend to remain implicit and hence unremarked on even if experienced.⁴

² full transcripts are available

³ One had dropped out of her degree and moved away, though she subsequently returned to start a different degree programme which she has now successfully completed.

⁴ A recent dissertation produced by one of my master's students discussed how his student informants commented positively on the experience of being involved in research interviews. For them it was the first time they had ever been consulted on their experiences of learning. Song, Qijun, 2006, 'English

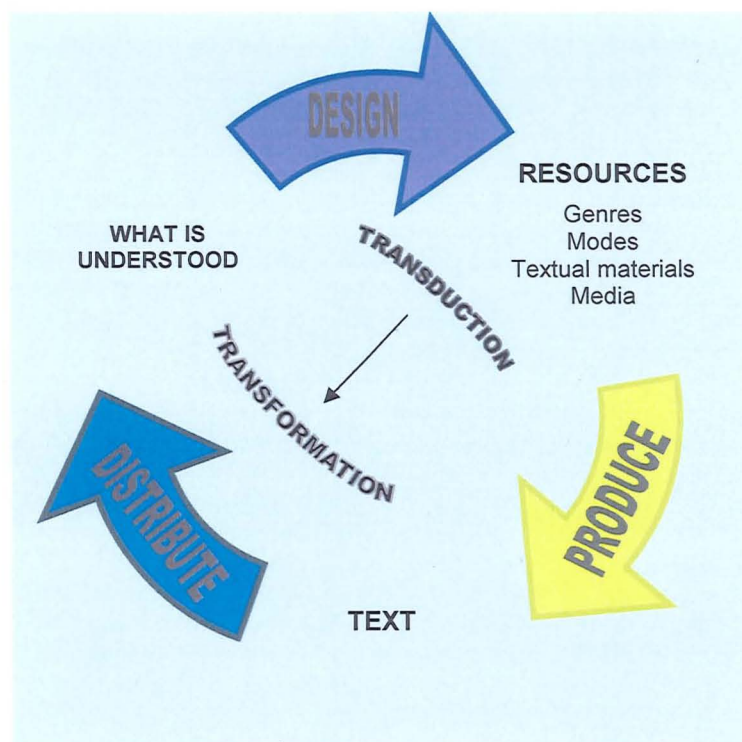
The interviews helped me in identifying how the different genres had led to different experiences and different ways of thinking about the disciplinary materials (the body of knowledge). The discussions confirmed some of the ideas I was already incubating and added new thoughts that I had not considered. Equally, they made me see more clearly how the regenerating process had acted on their own understandings and on their experience of doing the work itself. Taking the interviews and my gradually developing analyses of the written productions themselves together certain themes began to emerge: who you are as a writer, what it is like being a student, how genre choice effects the ways in which meaning can be made, how different genres allow different aspects of knowledge to be expressed. These themes will all be developed in the following chapters.

4.5 Analytical Tools

In order to talk about the interrelations between the themes and the different genres involved in this study, I needed to develop a means with which I could analyse the data. For this I have drawn mainly on the terms of reference established by Kress & Van Leeuwen (e.g. 2001) as has been seen in the previous chapters. I have some terminological issues to overcome and justify such as difference in mode when all the texts that I am analysing are produced as writing. For this I will draw on Volosinov and Bakhtin who establish certain notions regarding 'reported speech' (Volosinov) and 'primary and secondary utterances' (Bakhtin). These concepts give me the

In the previous chapter, I illustrated how I view the communicative cycle as a series of interactions involving choice in the materials used to express meaning. I explained how I came to consider the category of genre as having three orientations – contextual, thematic and semiotic and how the semiotic orientation emerges from the other two orientations. I now want to talk about how I subdivide the material resources into smaller categories.

If I return to my 'cycle of communication' chart, first introduced in Chapter Three, it might be easier to explain.



As can be seen, I have represented the Resources as genres, modes, materials and media because, I argue, it is with these 'things' that information is made and exchanged in the process of communication. By this, I do not want to suggest that it is a 'solid' entity like a ball in a game of catch. In that scenario, the ball is passed back and forth unaltered materially in the process. It essentially remains the same ball regardless of how many participants there are or who they are or why they are playing the game in the first place. By

and exchanged in the process of communication. By this, I do not want to suggest that it is a 'solid' entity like a ball in a game of catch. In that scenario, the ball is passed back and forth unaltered materially in the process. It essentially remains the same ball regardless of how many participants there are or who they are or why they are playing the game in the first place. By contrast, information as I want to use it involves the notion of *transformation* resulting from the interactions between the participants concerned in the communication and the *resources* with which they choose to express the information they want to communicate. This is a theme I will develop in Chapter Six.

If I am suggesting, as indeed I am, that communication involves making choices about which resources combine to produce the desired meanings for a particular communicative event, and if I am saying that genre is a resource that frames the communication in particular ways and insists on particular resource subsets (modes, textual material, media), then it is relevant to identify the other resources involved. I need to be able to say what these resources were and then what they achieved. Therefore, I will now set out an explanation of the different criteria I am using in my analysis. I will first of all list the terms of reference and clarify how I am using them. Then I will provide a working example to demonstrate the framework which I will use and refer to in later chapters. I have already explained, in Chapter Three, how the 'cycle of communication' inserted above can be understood, so I will now only refer to the material terms of reference – that is the Resources.

4.5.1 Resources

In the diagram above, there is an implied hierarchy for resource choice represented by the linear arrangement. However, I am not sure if this is an appropriate understanding of how resource choice works. I want to suggest

that genre occupies the primary choice position since it concerns the social-contextual framing as already explained, but after genre has been noted or understood, other resource choices follow. Furthermore, it is likely that while the genre will tend to remain stable within a given communicative event, the other choices may shift according to communicative effectiveness as experienced in the process of communicative interaction.

Although it may seem as if we are not exactly *choosing* the genre, since the circumstances in which the communication takes place might seem to determine which genre is most appropriate, I am suggesting that genre *is* a matter of choice. This idea may not immediately seem apparent precisely because in social interactions we tend towards conformity rather than towards dissent⁵. A genre, as already indicated, acts as a kind of shared code which enhances the potential success of the communication. Choosing an 'unexpected' genre will always lead to surprise and possibly communicative difficulty. Perhaps such a choice could be considered 'marked' in the sense that Halliday (1985) uses when considering thematic structure in verbal communication and which Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) discuss in relation to visual design. In my study, it could be argued that the regenred texts are 'marked' because they do not conform to the expected social circumstances. The question then, is, what do these 'marked' genres bring to the work itself?

However, regardless of whether a genre is chosen freely or is the result of convention and practice, not to mention social effectiveness, a genre will always give rise to other particular resource choices and I will now explain the terms of reference that I have settled on; that is, modes, textual materials

⁵ See Todorov's 1976 discussion on 'transgressing genre rules' in ed. Duff, D., 2000, *Modern Genre Theory*, Longman

and media. For the purposes of organisational convenience, I will talk about media first, since in my discussion, it plays a fairly marginal role.

4.5.2 Media

This aspect of textual production has only a marginal relevance to the present study as the work I am examining is all produced with the same media; that is, initially, type print on paper and subsequently digital print on screen. From this it should be clear that I am adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen's definition of media as the equipment (tools) used in the distribution of the work. However, it also needs to be made clear that *media* as understood here becomes mode once its meaning potential is expressed and/or interpreted. For example use of special fonts in writing can be both media – that is the 'equipment' – and mode if the choice of font has a particular communicative purpose.

4.5.3 Mode

The simplest way of clarifying the category of mode is to use it to refer to what might be called the communicative channel. In other words, I want mode to refer to speech, writing, actions, gestures and so on in so far as they are used in communicating meaning. As already illustrated in the previous chapter, mode is a choice just as, I argue, genre is a choice. Furthermore, choice of mode has implications in terms of the textual materials that will be used in the communication in the same way that choice of genre implies resource possibilities. I will explain *textual materials* below, but for now I will continue with mode.

To clarify it is helpful to return to the 'statistical information' I referred to in Chapter Three. In that case the genre (e.g. pub discussion, pie chart, formal report) insisted on certain modes of communication (spoken, visual, written) in its production. These modes in turn need / allow for certain textual materials (particular phonological elements, colours and shapes, grammatical selections).

Talking about mode is, of course, potentially problematic in my study as all the productions under analysis were produced with the single mode of writing. However, as will be seen, the different genres chosen by the students implied modes other than writing. Here the work of Volosinov and Bakhtin can be helpful in getting me out of this sticky problem, particularly because they were working largely within literary domains. Their discussions have strong relevance to my own data since it too operates in the literary domain – all being writing.

Bakhtin's framing of the issue as the 'problem' of speech genres relates directly to literary textual analysis, though of course much of his discussion revolves around the interactions involved in communication per se. In developing his argument, Bakhtin's use of the term 'genre' proposes, along with Volosinov's approach, that genres are concerned with the social purposes of what he calls 'the utterance' which is more or less equivalent to our notions of 'text' – the 'stuff' (Kress, 2002) of communication. Bakhtin distinguished between what he called 'secondary (complex) speech genres' and what he called 'primary (simple) genres'. The latter corresponds to Volosinov's 'behaviour genres', the everyday utterances of social interactions and routines, spoken language, while the former could be considered to refer to written language as experienced through literature. For Bakhtin primary genres are the unmediated or direct (spoken) utterances that occur

in everyday communication while secondary genres import these 'everyday' genres in order to create what he calls a complex of speech genres which are mediated by the producer into a unified (written) utterance.

Secondary (complex) speech genres – novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth – arise in more complex and highly developed and organised cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, socio-political, and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. (1986, p.62)

For Bakhtin the 'simple' versus 'complex' dichotomy is not one of 'linguistic' simplicity versus 'linguistic' complexity, but rather one of communicative immediacy (spokenness) versus communicative reflexivity (writtenness). In literature, as in other written genres, the utterance is produced by the author of the writing, at least one step removed from the 'everyday' utterances of social interaction.

For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form and their everyday significance only on the plane of the novel's content. They enter into actual reality only via the novel as a whole, that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life. The novel as a whole is an utterance just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or private letters are (they do have

a common nature), but unlike these, the novel is a secondary (complex) utterance. (Bakhtin, *ibid*, p. 62)

This is closely linked to Volosinov's discussions on what he calls 'reported speech'⁶ which has a particular resonance with my own discussions. By reported speech, Volosinov is talking about authorial representations of the 'speech' of others in literary and other 'authored' texts. 'Reported speech is speech within speech, utterance within utterance and at the same time also *speech about speech and utterance about utterance* [sic].' (*ibid*:115). He classifies his conception of reported speech into what he calls indirect or direct discourse⁷ with shades (quasi indirect and quasi direct) of reportedness. These terms correspond more closely to how we today consider 'direct speech' – the speech of others as uttered in its own right versus 'indirect speech' – the speech of others as synthesised, incorporated into the 'speech' of the author.

In literary texts Bakhtin's 'rejoinders' or 'letters' , that is 'primary speech genres' and Volosinov's 'reported speech' form an intricate network that are combined by the author into the production of a (written) text or 'secondary speech genre' whereby both the 'author's speech and the reported speech 'take shape only in their interrelation, and not on their own, the one apart from the other. The reported speech and the reporting context are but the terms of a dynamic interrelationship. This dynamism reflects the dynamism of social interorientation in verbal ideological communication.' (Volosinov, 1929:119).

⁶ This corresponds to a large extent with Bakhtin's concept of monologic utterance – that of the author – and objectified or represented utterance – that of the 'others'.

⁷ This conceptualisation of 'discourse' differs, as I understand it, from both the linguistic use of the term (e.g. Brown & Yule, 1983) and the non-linguistic, ideological use (e.g. Foucault, e.g. 1972).

Example

I want now to illustrate what this by drawing on one of the student productions involved in this study which is contextualised as a radio phone-in with the economists, Keynes and Freedman, as guests.

Extract 4.1

JM Keynes: My alternative theory, and also more acceptable theory,

M Freedman: Acceptable? By who?

(MF jumps up)

JMK: By the majority!

(JMK looks sharply at MF)

Host: O.K. chaps, can we let JMK finish his presentation. You can debate your differences during the question and answer session with our listeners in part two of tonight's show.

This extract is an example of what Volosinov considers to be 'reported speech' in the sense that the 'speech' sits inside the author's context. The author has represented (imported?) the 'speech of others' in the making of his own utterance which is the production as a whole. In this example, the reported speech is represented as 'direct discourse' (Volosinov) in that it acts as if it were actually being spoken as part of a fully realised discussion. However, the 'other speakers' do not 'speak' on their own behalf, but in the service of the author who has created the dialogue in the first place. In the following extract, taken from the same student's original essay, the reported speech is presented as 'indirect discourse' where the 'speech' is presented as a synthesis within the author's speech.

Extract 4.2

Keynesian theory states that 'r' is determined by money demand and money supply, not thrift and productivity as in Classical theory

Both texts represent what Bakhtin (1978) highlights here when he discusses the way in which an author uses the speech of others.

... an author may utilise the speech of another in pursuit of his own aims and in such a way as to impose a new intention on the utterance, which nevertheless retains its own proper referential intention. (Bakhtin, 1978 :180)

Each of the two texts illustrated above are differently contextualised so are differently shaped by the author. In other words, they represent different genres, the first being a *dramatised production* (a radio phone-in) and the second being an *essay*. They also represent different 'behavioural' genres (Volosinov); the first being a *debate* (disagreement) and the second being part of a written *argument* (counterpoint or contradiction).

The terms of reference developed by the Russian circle can, of course, be confusing as they do not correspond to current conceptualisations of, for instance, genre or reported speech and the use of the term 'discourse' here is also problematic given the bifurcation between linguistic interpretations of that term (e.g. Brown & Yule, 1983) and ideological interpretations deriving from the work of Foucault (e.g. 1972). However, the discussions and analyses that these writers produced have a fundamental relevance to conceptualisations of language as interaction contextualised in particular genre frames. The concept of 'reported speech' also helps me to overcome

the difficulty of discussing the mode shift in my later analyses where the shift from writtenness to spokenness is all enacted through writing (i.e. essays to plays) and it allows me to treat the speech as 'reported' or 'primary' without falling foul of the fact that they are produced with writing. In my later discussions of the texts under analysis, I want to use the term '*scripted speech*' to represent the dialogues within the dramatised regenerated productions as opposed to '*citations*' in the essay productions.

The modes selected in the production of the work bring about an effect on how the information expressed means. Halliday's discussions on spoken and written language (e.g. 1989) provide a useful position from which to explore this issue. While he suggests that 'language is more important than either [speech or writing]' (p.92) he also asks whether 'speech and writing impose different grids on experience. [...] a sense in which they create different realities' (p.93). And it is this that work in multimodal discourse, including my own current work, seeks to explore.

So far I have been referring to speech in writing, but I also need to point out that some of the regenerated productions imply other modes of expression: gesture, movement, actions, physical appearance and so on and I will include these in my later analyses. In the same ways that spokenness 'imposes a different grid on experience' (ibid), so too do other semiotic modes. A gesture as greeting means differently to a verbal greeting. Each achieves a different communicative experience and each produces a different communicative effect as a result of their respective affordances.

4.5.4 Textual Material

I want to now explain what I mean by *textual material*. This aspect of the analysis concerns the different 'elements' that constitute the fabric of the

communication. They comprise, the *thematic orientation* and the *semiotic orientation* discussed in the previous chapter. Because it allows for focus on particular aspects of textual production, these terms of reference help me to make more visible the resource implications of the different genres and hence will allow me to make suggestions about how these influence the meanings and the experiences of the work itself.

I will also be using the concepts of *design*, *production* and *distribution* (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) in considering the effects of the different versions as these concepts help to focus discussion on the social processes and practices involved in communication. I have already explained these concepts in the previous chapter.

4.6 'Transgressing Genre Laws'

Writing in 1978 (reprinted, 2000) Todorov, in discussing the relevance of genre as a means to understanding institutionalised forms of social interaction, argues that through 'transgressing' genre 'laws' we can begin to see what those 'laws' are, '... the norm becomes visible – comes into existence – owing only to its transgressions.' (p.196). In my study, the opportunity to compare the differently represented versions of what was the same material, by which I mean information drawn from a particular 'body of disciplinary knowledge', has allowed me to explore the impact of genre choice. I can begin to see how the affordances of one genre forces a particular way of making certain 'content' mean whilst the affordances of a different genre forces another way of meaning making.

The following extracts, taken from the work of Andy, who was studying politics, provide the opportunity to see the effect of genre shift. The essay in question was a discussion about methods of classification of political systems. The regenerated version was produced as a tabloid newspaper presented in columns and including different font types and inserted photographs. (See Appendix 4.4 for full text) I have concentrated here on the verbal impacts rather than the visual and therefore have not used the regenerated version as it was produced by its author.

Extract One (essay)

...Aristotle also gives too great a focus on the political elite when analysing the political system. As Sinclair points out in his introduction to *The Politics*, 'the privileges of citizenship were to him a matter of supreme importance' (Sinclair, 1962) mainly because he was not a 'citizen' himself....

Extract Two (Tabloid Article)

Malicious rumours have also been spreading about Aristotle that there is a hidden agenda behind his model, which clearly focuses on the political elite rather than the ordinary man in the forum. A senior source from the peripatetic school in Athens (at which Aristotle is a key teacher) has revealed that "the privileges of citizenship [are] to him a matter of supreme importance". The Daily Lie can today reveal that Aristotle is not in fact a citizen of Athens, but an asylum seeker from the Kingdom of Macedon. This being the case, there is only one question that is now on everybody's lips. We demand to know if Aristotle's book,

praising as it does his own government, [is] merely an attempt to curry favour with the Athenian authorities?

Both versions present information drawn from the same source of disciplinary knowledge (Sinclair, 1962) which constitutes what can be considered a particular view on Aristotle's work. However, the difference in genre choice results in differences in how the texts mean. Tabloid writing allows for, or rather demands a different kind of explication of the facts and Andy has made full use of this in elaborating the heavily underplayed comment regarding Aristotle's preoccupation with citizenship in the original essay. In producing the two texts, Andy has drawn on different ranges of material resources (modes, media and textual materials).

Comparison of the versions allows for consideration of how the material choices affect the social impact of the different texts, for instance discursive orientation, and this in turn facilitates discussion about what different genres do. The second extract, for example, 'violates' the conventional essay genre on several levels: use of certain textual materials (e.g. malicious rumours), the unnamed source⁸, the explicit development of the status of Aristotle which was merely implied in the essay (asylum seeker). Furthermore the regenerated version allows the writer to link the historical context to present day attitudes, something which, arguably, adds a different angle on an understanding of Aristotle's work – the kind of 'originality' that the lecturers in Chapter Two were so keen on.

The shift that occurs from the essay to the tabloid is, I suggest, far more than simply a shift in context and in thematic structure, but a shift in how the text

⁸ Though the student did provide a footnoted reference in compliance to a request I myself had made

means. In other words, what I am suggesting is that the meaning potential of each version is substantially different. The essayist text affords one kind of meaning potential associated with being a student, presenting learned information using 'essayist' discourse, produced with particular material resources, whilst the tabloid affords a different meaning potential resulting from the different resource options and the different discursive orientation that such genres represent (exaggerated, opinionated, capricious).

Andy commented on how the process highlighted the way different genres express meaning. He had a sense that the tabloid genre demanded what he called 'pacey' writing whereas the essayist information he was dealing with had been produced with more 'technical' linguistic resources.

I was trying to make it as immediate as possible and in terms of the quotes it was often hard to find the right kind of quote because it was in such a different style of language but yes I just tried to make it sort of as pacey as possible. [...] I was trying to make it more accessible and make the language simpler. I mean I attempted to do it a bit in the style of a tabloid newspaper and that was very hard cos looking at tabloid newspapers the articles are much shorter [...] and the style of language was much more technical [in the essay] so that was hard.

What Andy is talking about here is the discursive orientation of the different genres, the elements that typify them. If we look more closely at the two versions we can see that the genres afford different understandings of what is apparently the same basic content. This is, of course, to do with the different materials used in the different versions. Just as with the examples concerning the statistical information discussed above, the generic framing here offers different interpretive possibilities because the social context in

which these kinds of texts are produced differ and represent different discourses. Do we believe the tabloid rather than the essay? How is the suggestion of Aristotle's 'outsider' status presented in terms of how it can be understood? How do the words: 'Aristotle also gives too great a focus on the political elite' mean when compared to the words: 'We demand to know if Aristotle's book, praising as it does his own government, is merely an attempt to curry favour with the Athenian authorities?'

4.7 A Framework for Displaying Differences

In my analyses in the following chapters, I will refer to the different orientations that I discussed in Chapter Three while comparing the versions using the terms of reference discussed here. I will display some of these differences in tabulated format as illustrated below for clarity of view. I realise that such a display suggests direct correspondence between categories and versions, although this is not always the case, particularly with regard to the material resources. Nevertheless, the display offers an immediate impression of the differences between the versions drawing attention to genre effect, and as such I think it can be justified. I have organised the orientations into 'The Social' , subsuming the *contextual* and *discursive* orientations of genre and 'The Material' which comprises the *thematic* and *semiotic* orientations.

T H E S O C I A L		
<i>Genre</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>New Genre</i>
contextual orientation		
<i>Design</i>		
<i>Production</i>		
<i>Distribution</i>		
discursive orientation		
<i>Purpose</i>		
<i>Process</i>		
<i>Identity</i>		
<i>Role</i>		
<i>Agency</i>		

T H E M A T E R I A L		
<i>Genre</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>New Genre</i>
thematic orientation		
<i>topics</i>		
<i>stages/phases</i>		
semiotic orientation		
<i>modes</i>		
<i>textual materials</i>		

My analysis will explore the materials involved in the different productions and will consider the impact of these material resources on the discursive, semiotic and thematic orientations of the different genres. I have decided not to include 'media' as a category for this discussion as all the work was produced, as already mentioned, with the same media (computers, word processing packages) and all were distributed with print on paper. Where there are specific choices made in terms of typeface or font size and this is relevant to the discussion, then I will include it under textual materials which I use to represent the semiotic resources as expressed either verbally or visually. Textual materials can be further categorised into topics such as interpersonal resources, ideational resources and textual resources, following Halliday (1985). So in the essayist extract above, the writer has chosen a particular organisational structure which offers an opinion (Aristotle also gives too great a focus...) followed by a citation as back-up (As Sinclair points out...). This is achieved with certain lexical and grammatical choices arranged in a particular way as I have briefly discussed in connection to Andy's two extracts. By drawing attention to the material resources used in the production of these texts, I hope to be able to reveal what the different genres do and how they do it.

Although each was a response to an assignment task within the institutional practice of university and learning and demonstration of learning, the tabloid transgresses this relationship in that it suspends belief in the conventional social relations between the reader (me) and the writer (the student). The material resources used for each production differ, as already indicated in range of vocabulary grammatical structure and the kinds of statements that can actually be made. Tabloids can make unattributed statements and express explicitly highly subjective opinions whereas essays are expected to attribute and moderate subjectivity. What's more, if we are

socially and culturally familiar with the two genres (as produced within particular social and cultural contexts) then we as reader receive them differently. We have an expectation of how an essay will mean and we have an expectation of how a tabloid newspaper article will mean, and as such we (readers) adjust our interpretative perspective accordingly.

What I shall argue over the next three chapters is that the genres chosen by my student informants not only allowed them to write differently about the things that they had written about in their original essays, but also brought about differences in who they were as writers, what they wrote about and what perspectives they were able to take. The next Chapter will explore the discursive orientation of the different genres used, Chapter Six will examine the semiotic orientation of the different versions, that is how the new genres afforded different semiotic opportunities. Chapter Seven will discuss thematic orientation – what the writers were able to write about.

A point that I want to make clear here concerns the way in which I have chosen to classify my analytical foci. It has been extremely difficult to decide how to organise my own discussions particularly given the breadth of field I wish to explore, not to mention the richness of my data. I could, for instance have used one of the students' work as focus for analysis, but this might have given the impression of a 'one off' experience. One consequence of organising the next three chapters in the way I have is that there is a tendency for what I have tried to separate out thematically (discursive orientation and agency, semiotic orientation and impact of resources and thematic orientation and focus of discussion) to overlap and merge. This is, I think, inevitable and although I have tried to hold back from mixing my analyses up, there will be times when this has proved impossible. Equally, there might be the desire on the part of the reader, as there has been on my

part, for me to mention things that are discussed in other chapters. This means that readers will need to hold back until they have finished Chapter Seven at least, by which point I hope the picture will have become clearer because it will be more complete. I realise that this is perhaps frustrating, and indeed it has been frustrating in the writing.

One further comment that I think it is important to make is that I will not be making any judgement on the validity or otherwise of what the students produced in terms of disciplinary knowledge. This is an issue that I will mention in my concluding chapter, but my specific analyses over the next three chapters will focus on the particular ways in which the different genres afforded different communicative opportunities.

Chapter Five – Repositioning The Writer: discursive identity and agency

It wasn't so much having to reproduce facts and saying the right thing to get the marks it was more of an exercise in doing it the way you wanted to. (Peter)

5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I consider the idea of discursive identity and genre with particular reference to agency. In Chapter Two I discussed the sometimes problematic interactions between students and lecturers around the issue of essay writing and the gap between expectations and experience on the part of both groups. I discussed how students are situated as novices and suggested that the circumstances in which students produce written work is always going to be fraught with difficulty given the high stakes that is attached to the process, particularly in connection to grades and commentaries. Students expressed frustration with their experience and some indicated that they felt their own views were invalid in relation to the 'received' views of disciplinary convention. In this chapter I will explore these ideas further and will suggest that the student essay orients towards a particular discursive identity whereas the regendered productions, with their different discursive orientations, allowed students to adopt, or perhaps develop, a different discursive identity. As a result, the interface between what they wrote (the content) and who they were as writers (discursive identity) led to a shift in how their work could be read and how 'visible' the writers were in their work.

This Chapter will therefore explore the issue of genre and agency and will suggest that the regenring afforded the students the opportunity to explore discursive identities which allowed them to relate to the disciplinary content from a position of greater authority and hence allowed for a much stronger sense of writer's agency. I will use examples from two particular students using the analytical framework I explained in the previous chapter.

My reason for choosing these particular productions is because both examples fall into the category of 'as if' genres which I referred to in the previous chapter, where the writer assumes an alternative discursive identity. This is not to say that there was no shift in agency in the work of other students involved in this study. Andy's work, which I referred to in the previous chapter is a case in point as are the other examples discussed in later chapters. And in certain cases, instead of adopting a new identity (as if) some students asserted their own identity as students (as). However, in this chapter I want to explore the way in which a different discursive identity effects agency. And as I am suggesting that regenring allowed for a shift in agency, I need to explain how I want to represent that term itself. This I do in the next section.

A further reason for discussing these two examples together is that each involved interaction with younger participants. Peter's regenred production is intended for a younger readership allowing him to adopt the discursive identity of an 'expert' professional writer while Saskia's dramatisation involves a parent 'telling' his children about the subject, a device which also has an empowered discursive position. However, in her case, the issue of agency is more complex as there are three characters in the reproduction, the parent who has the expertise (knowledge) and the two children who, as will

be seen, serve to challenge the parental expertise or, perhaps more accurately, power. I will also refer to Saskia's work in Chapter Seven.

The fact that both students were taking the same degree programme is incidental as is the fact that both of them chose to write about a similar topic, Swahili, and both had chosen essays on a similar topic to regene. However, while Peter's original essay had been a competent piece of discursive writing, Saskia's was a somewhat fragmented piece of work which showed little evidence of engagement with the subject.

5.2 The Hand in the Work

As already indicated above, I want to use the concept of *agency* in a particular way. I want to represent agency as the interface between participants in a communicative event. It refers to how the information or message to be communicated is 'mediated' by the producer through its design, production and distribution. (refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for discussion of communicative choices) It represents *what is done with* the semiotic resources in the attempt to communicate meaning. An aspect of this is what is often considered as 'voice', that is, writer's voice in identifying self in the text produced (see e.g. Ivanic, 1998 or Lillis, 2001) and involves issues of audience, of participant status, identity and power, of context and so on. But for my purposes, like Scott (1999), I want to think of agency as emerging through the process of production along with Kress's concept of the 'motivated sign' where the means of production (choice of resources and their affordances) carries the producer's agency. In other words, what I am talking about here is what I want to call 'the hand in the work'.

It is quite useful to (re)locate the term, agency, in its grammatical setting of passive and active structures (mood). If we consider the following examples, it is possible to understand this idea more easily.

1.



2. The window is broken.
3. Mary broke the window.
4. The window was broken by Mary.

Number one presents an image of what I hope can be considered a broken window. It just exists. It is presented as a-temporal, although past tense is implicit in how it might be understood by a (human) observer. No known agency is 'visible', though an observer might think about how it had happened. It would very much depend on the contextual situation – is it your own house, a neighbour's, a derelict building and so on?

Number two could be considered a verbal representation of the image. Again, no agency is ascribed, though it is implied. In other words, the window didn't break itself. This does not mean that human agency is necessarily involved, as the damage could have been caused by the wind, for example.

In the third sentence agency is explicitly named, represented by the subject, Mary, who seems to have interfaced with the window rather unfortunately. Her agency is crucial in understanding the meaning of the sentence as, in English at least, a subject form is necessary. In numbers one and two we

have only the broken window and no explicitly named agent. In this sense we cannot know any more about the event itself only the result, although a good detective might be able to work out how the window came to be broken through examining the details of the break itself. In the third example the process itself is prioritised through identifying the agent as subject. What's more, if we know Mary, then we can infer other things about the event. For instance, maybe Mary likes playing football in the garden, maybe she is accident prone, maybe she has a quick temper.

Finally, in number four, the passive is chosen to convey the message. It purports to shift the relevance of agency, by placing the effect of the event in thematic position – the window's brokenness, and agency in rheme position. However, this reversal of position can also serve to foreground the agent (Mary) by singling her out for responsibility perhaps as opposed to others. Once we know (or think) it was Mary, we can understand more about the event, so long as we actually know something about Mary as in the case of number three above. (see Kress and Hodge, 1979, for extensive discussion on grammar and transformation)

In a multimodal analysis, agency is further analysed in terms more usually associated with the making of 'product' (manufacturing for instance); that is design, production and distribution (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). Splitting the process into these three 'phases' (states) helps to make more visible the processes involved in communicative practice. These three phases represent different (inter)actions which constitute the communicative event. Design can be realised through different semiotic media and different semiotic modes and determines or rather *anticipates* certain communicative practices (e.g. discourses). These in turn are influenced/shaped/informed by the context (cultures, histories and geographies) in which they are developed

and the production and distribution also bear traces of the environments (physical space, casual passing events) in which they are produced. (see Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001 for full discussion).

A further noteworthy point is the greater the power distance between the participants the less flexible the choice is likely to be, or rather the more difficult it is to be flexible. For example, in an interview between suspect and police, the power relationship is always unequal. The suspect can't just walk away, though s/he can refuse to speak (using the semiotic resource of silence), despite the threat of negative impact on the defence case. Equally, the more conventionalised the practice is, the greater the limitations are in production terms. Expectations of how an articulation *will* be can become how it *should* be. This is particularly relevant in the context of my discussion of student writing.

In the context of my discussion, these elements play a key role, particularly in connection with the notion of agency; the interface between the different phases of the process involved in the communication. I would also like to introduce a further notional term here, that of 'client' as it fits well with the type of analysis I am undertaking and to some extent continues the metaphor inherent in the multimodal frame.

To illustrate this point, I will offer an example. Take the situation of a carpenter and a client. The client wants some work done in a particular way and explains this to the carpenter in some detail. In this example the client is not an expert in matters of carpentry while the carpenter is very experienced. The work concerns the renovation of an old wooden floor in a house of the type the carpenter is very used to working on. In the communication there is a misunderstanding but one which is unknown to either party. The

carpenter goes ahead with the work whilst the client is absent. On his return, the client sees immediately that the work undertaken is very different to the design he had in mind at the outset. The carpenter had reinterpreted the design according to his own experience, expertise and understanding about the nature of this kind of work. The client now has a choice. Will he get angry and demand that the work be redone or does he accept the redesign of the carpenter, who is after all the expert in these matters? This all depends on a range of factors relating to the way in which the work has been completed (quality), the way in which the client views the carpenter (status), the acceptability of the product in terms of its appropriateness (relevance), the relationship between the participants (power) and the way in which each views themselves (identity). But to get back to the point, agency here can be understood as being the thoughts and actions of the carpenter in mediating and interpreting the blueprint. Because he is an expert and the quality of his work is excellent, the reinterpreted production could be accepted. The floor was *reinterpreted by* the carpenter and *accepted by* the client.

This idea can be explained by the concept of *agency* and can be represented schematically using the chart I introduced in Chapter Two.

INTERACTIONS			
Design	Re-design	Production	Distribution
What the client envisages and why	How the carpenter (re)interprets and why	What the carpenter produces	How the production is received and what is done next

Figure 5.1

The question of how far the production is 'allowed' to stray from the 'blueprint' depends on the relationship between the participants and how they perceive themselves and each other. In the case of the carpenter above, the story had a happy ending as the new design was better in many ways than what the clients had envisaged, and the client recognised and accepted the carpenter's greater expertise in these matters.

Agency, then, operates on the interpersonal level, the social interface between the participants. Who they are has an impact on the communicative choices they make. In Chapter Three, for instance, I discussed how statistical information can be differently expressed depending on the meanings the participants want to make which, in turn are associated with the identities of the participants, the circumstances they are in and the interactions that occur. So without straying too far from my own design, the point is that agency is what gives the communication its own identity. The more known, and perhaps knowing (powerful?), the agent is, the more visible and acceptable is (or can be) the agency.

In the case of student work, as already discussed in Chapter Two, the social positionings of the participants is institutionally established. The following comment, in response to my question to lecturers on who they were as readers of students' work expresses this well.

Because they are students we can't help but read their work more – perhaps even more critically because it's not coming from an authoritative voice in a sense – so I think that – not necessarily by necessity, but effectively I think we land up reading our student's work expecting there to be problems with it.

This view clearly situates the relationship as 'unequal' and reflects the experiences that students commented on with regard to their own feelings of unempoweredness. The lecturer above, expressed his own ambivalence towards the role and further clarified his personal reflections on identity and reading students' work by suggesting that he needed also to be aware of the personal baggage that he carried as a reader; *'I'm often conscious or reflective about the fact that I'm also a fairly privileged white male reading this work'* In fact, all the lecturers I asked indicated somewhat mixed feelings about their identity in this respect, but all expressed in some form or another that they saw themselves as constructive critical readers. In the context of the institutional relationship between lecturers and students, it seems almost impossible to break the relationship, and indeed perhaps it is also undesirable. What I want to show in the rest of this chapter is how the shift in discursive identity that the regenring allowed led to a greater sense of writer's agency in the new productions when compared to the essays and how this shift was expressed.

5.3 Analysing the Productions

I now turn again to the work I have been analysing, the versions of the student essays in hand. I will consider them from the perspective of agency taking into account the design, production and distribution framework described above and also considering the notions of the framing of academic knowledge discussed by Bernstein (2000). I will compare elements between selected versions of the student work in order to see how agency was affected by the change in genre and the different framing for the knowledge.

In all the cases that I refer to in this study, the design differed, production differed but distribution was similar, that is students were producing this work for summative assessment on paper and in print. However the circumstances differed somewhat because this work was produced in an inter-disciplinary context as far as the students were concerned, although as far as I was concerned, the context was, of course, disciplinary. Perhaps a more important aspect of the circumstances in which the new work was produced concerns the fact that these were re-workings rather than first time contact with the content presented in the original essays.

You don't have to do any reading for it so it's just taking from and you know I didn't have to sit down and get readings together so it wasn't that kind of essay – it had all been done so um in some ways it was easier trying to work out, you know machinations of sentences and occasionally whole paragraphs and working out which bits to ignore and which to keep um and trying to make it sound you know not complicated – you know try and make it sound serious whilst being – not make it for laymen make it for children but not so it's – not trying to make it too patronising. (Peter)

In all cases, the issues of agency discussed above are manifest, particularly in terms of the shift in discursive identity as the writers moved from the original versions to their rewrites. This is partly to do with their increased confidence in what they knew about the topic, having already written about it, but also in the different opportunities they had to explore this knowledge in a completely different frame as indicated in the comments above.

Such a shift in the design, production and distribution of the work ensures a very different engagement with the work itself, both from the perspective of the writer and the reader. Similarly, although in reality I was still the main

reader with the responsibility for giving a summative response – as an assessor, belief was suspended explicitly for the purposes of the task. In other words, the writers were nevertheless able to divorce themselves from the reality of an assessed assignment and produce their new work without, apparently, too much concern for the institutional constraints.

Peter – [...] – *you know when I did the Swahili one it was a proper essay – you know you felt you needed to be in the library surrounded by books whereas this one was more an exercise in just - it wasn't so much having to reproduce facts and saying the right thing to get the marks it was more of an exercise in doing it the way you wanted to.*

Me – *So with the original one you were thinking of what 'they' wanted.*

Peter – *Well the 'they' is different you're not thinking about writing it so that someone can understand you know like a child would, you're writing to fulfil requirements you know the whole academic way of writing um whereas re-writing was more being considerate to the audience as well as being more considerate to yourself. When you write an essay for the proper thing you sort of you're trying to think about the marks and not how best to maybe write what you want but how best to write what is required of you.*

My reasons for choosing the two productions in this chapter, as already mentioned, are because each of the writers adopted a different discursive identity in the regenerated work. In the first case, the new production adopted the discursive identity of 'textbook' or 'children's information book' writer while in the second example the student adopted the discursive identity of a tabloid journalist.

I will take each case in turn and select paired extracts from the work to consider how they differently articulate the content and, more specifically in this chapter, how writer's agency is differently expressed.

5.4 Peter's Work

Peter as has been mentioned, was studying for a BA in African Studies. He identified the Swahili essay as being an appropriate one to regenre as a children's (aged 11 – 13) expository text because he felt it might be of general interest and also because he believed it useful for people to learn more about languages. This is something he had realised through taking the Language Power and Ideologies unit and it had helped him see the relevance of learning other languages in this respect

You know people use English as their own language but don't really think about things – I don't know, maybe it's learning about other languages that makes you think about your own (Peter)

Perhaps this is why the Swahili essay lent itself to a regenring for a younger readership. That is, it would allow him to produce something that had the kind of didactic purpose that typifies 'information' writing for child readers.

I knew I wanted to write it – I always used to like draw kiddy books and it was just picking one (an essay) that seemed to lend itself best [...]– I was trying to take one that would have been more useful so I just picked that one. (Peter)

The choice of a younger readership lent itself to a conscious repositioning of identity for the writer as it shifted his position from that of learner to that of teacher. This new didactic role allowed the writer, as can be seen in figure 5.1 below, to be an informant rather than a performer, an authority instead of a novice and in Bernstein's (2000) terms a 'recontextualiser' rather than a 'reproducer'. The discursive identity allows him to position the readers as novices, in much the same way that Hyland (2000) discusses textbook writers position their readers. In this way, the choice of readership (circumstances) determined the choice of genre which, in turn, ensured a particular set of other semiotic resource choices.

The essay in question was his response to the assignment task: *From a set of Swahili loan words, establish the linguistic source of each word and suggest the probable period from when it was borrowed.* (See Chapter Four for summary) The original essay is of about two thousand words and is what might be considered a confident production which provides what is undoubtedly a synthesis of information acquired from both lectures and reading. It is largely a descriptive piece, as the assignment demands, providing both historical and linguistic information. Peter has, however, incorporated his own perspective in this work as he has framed the essay within the broader setting of loan words in English, something which was not 'required' by the essay task itself.

For the most part, however, the text is what I might call a *display* text. It is a successful display, which, just like others I refer to in this study, provides a synthesis of information acquired from various sources and presented here largely as a reproduction. This is the kind of text that students express frustration over, as already discussed, though perhaps it is something that

we all need to go through as part of the process of engaging with the information and negotiating our own understanding of it.

The rewritten version, by contrast, despite providing almost identical information, manages to achieve an entirely different sense of authorship and a different sense of ownership. In the first case, the process was to represent information within the frame of the essay question. This required the writer to select and highlight certain pieces of information to form a coherent whole in response to the given question. In other words, the student was provided with a design by his tutor and his own production was expected to fulfil the 'requirements' of that design no matter how 'implicit' they might be. In the second case, the student is working with information that he is already very familiar with having used it in the original essay. The process here is bound to be different partly because of this and partly because he is now working to a design of his own. Nobody suggested how he should do the work. The only design parameter related to the information itself. In other words, I asked for the same information, to be reflected in the rewrite. In this case, as in all the others, that stricture was adhered to, though the way in which the information was manifested is the point of this discussion.

5.4.1 Comparing Social Orientations

In Table 5.1 below, I have outlined what I consider to be key differences in terms of the social interactions that each version affords using the analytical framework that I established in the previous chapter.

<i>The Social</i>		
Contextual Orientation	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Children's Information 'article'</i>
Design	responding to client's design	designing for client
Production	Essayist (student essay)	expository (for young readers)
Distribution	For institutional assessment <i>normative practice - reproduction of..</i> Evaluation against normative implicit disciplinary (and institutionalised) criteria and/ or values	For institutional assessment <i>alternative practice - experiment - reconfiguration of...</i> Interpretive effect - for assessment / evaluation against non-normative disciplinary criteria and /or values
Discursive Orientation		
Purpose	Display knowledge of client's design Display learning	Experiment with learning / writing Tell (teach) about entertain
Process	Acquire Reflect Reproduce Report	Reflect Recontextualise Create Inform
Identity	Novice <i>as though</i> expert	Expert <i>as if</i> children's book writer
Role	Performer	Informer
Agency	mediated disguised/ unidentifiable Intertextual	unmediated visible Interpersonal

Table 5.1

5.4.2 Comparing Material Orientations

Table 5.2 below summarises differences between the two versions with reference to some of the thematic and semiotic differences.

<i>The Material</i>		
Thematic Orientation	Essay	Children's Information 'article'
e.g. General characteristics of 'macro genre'	Discussion, descriptions, explanations, examples Essay management (introduction, 'body', conclusion i.e. sequence of information/ideas)	Discussion, descriptions, explanations, examples Organisation (introduction, 'body' and conclusion)
e.g. Specific characteristics of 'micro genre'	disciplinary features - e.g. linguistic concerns	explanation, contextualisation and clarification of linguistic topics
e.g. Specific characteristics of the work in hand	Swahili loan words, history of borrowing, etc.	English and Swahili as languages that each borrow words
Semiotic Orientation		
Genres	Essay	Childrens' Expository Article
Modes	writing	writing
Textual Materials	impersonal forms (e.g. 'it' fronted, passives, nominalisations ¹) density of expression / clause density	personal forms (e.g. subject fronted, addressivity) <i>looseness</i> of expression / clause intricacy

¹ For instance, in Extract 4, *The British interest in Africa has been well documented*. V.s. in Extract 5, *The British became interested in Africa in the 1800's*. In the former the sentence is fronted by a noun phrase (The British interest in Africa) acting as object of the agentless passive verb (has been well documented). In the 'children's' version the information is expressed quite differently with the subject (The British) acting as subject to the verb (became interested in). The nominalised 'interest' in the first version shifts into verb form, became interested, in the second version. See the next chapter for a fuller discussion of these textual materials issues.

	embedded / indirect questions	direct (rhetorical) questions
	disciplinary terminology	'everyday' terms
	formal (writing-like) expression (e.g. full forms, subordination)	colloquial (speaking-like) expression (e.g. contracted forms, co-ordinators in first position - so, and)
	implicitness (assumed knowledge)	explicitness (assumed 'ignorance')
	12 point Palatino	14 point Palatino

Table 5.2

In the table I have generalised the material choices but will discuss these in more detail with specific examples below. For now I want simply to show that the different versions were produced from a different set of resources as the genre shift allowed. These different choices both correspond to and reflect the change in identity for the writer, from student (novice) performer to (more) expert teacher. To draw on Bernstein (2000), what Peter has done is recontextualise the original 'knowledge' into a consciously pedagogic discourse which combines information transmission within an ideological frame – in this case the frame of linguistic equivalence – all languages – even the 'powerful' English incorporate ('steal') words from other languages. Here the intention is to teach whereas in Version One the intention is to display, to show what he knows/has learned about the topic. In order to 'display' his acquisition he reproduces the information drawing on similar resources to those used by his sources thereby demonstrating not only that he has acquired the knowledge but also that he has adopted (understood) the ways of writing that knowledge – the disciplinary discourse.

5.4.3 Comparing Extracts

The next part of the discussion considers three sets of paired extracts to illustrate differences between the versions (See Appendix 4.1 for full texts). I will draw attention to the different material resources chosen in the making of each version and consider how those choices bring about the different social impact suggested by the table above. Throughout the analytical chapters, including this one, I attempt to select comparative extracts, but I need to point out that they may not exactly co-relate. This is because in the regenred work, the genre itself may result in the 'information' being differently distributed through the text. However, as far as possible, and in order to highlight the shifts that occur, I have attempted to select extracts where comparison is possible.

This particular set represents the opening section of each of the versions and serves as the lead-in to the discussion to follow. Each extract, as would be expected from an introductory phase, establishes the perspective with which the writer intends to position his work and provides a contextual frame. However, in each case, the contextual frame, that of English loan words, may not appear to correspond to the topic of Swahili loan words. In fact, Peter locates his discussion in a more general frame of what he clearly considers negative attitudes towards languages such as Swahili and in these opening sections he is clearly seeking to redress some balance that he must have encountered in readings or in discussions with other people. This reflects a strong sense of writer's agency and despite the subsequent rather descriptive account of loan words this strong opening ensures a continued trace of the hand in the work. However, it is only when we compare the essay with the regenred work that we can see how important Peter felt this particular issue to be and how, in the essay it is very much underplayed while in the new version it forms a strong thematic line.

In each pair of extracts, the first refers to the essay and the second to the regenerated work.

Extract 5.1

It is not necessary to learn a foreign tongue to become aware that an individual language is far from immune to outside influence. The English with which we converse daily is littered with words and phrases borrowed from a host of other languages.

Extract 5.2

'Laissez-faire', Déjà vu' and that's only a start. We all speak English every day, but do we realise how often we use foreign words and phrases? And this word stealing is not always as plain to see as the examples above. What country do you think of when you wash your hair? Silly question is what you are all thinking. But did you know that 'shampoo' is a Hindi word; that's the language that all the people in India speak. So if English can go around stealing words from other languages then why can't other languages do the same?

The most immediate difference, of course, concerns the length of each of these extracts and the difference in font size. The larger font size chosen for the children's text expresses accessibility, reader friendliness and as shown by, for instance, Oweston & Wideman (1997), preferred by young writers

using word processing packages.² It could also be argued that even the choice of font size implies agency – transgressing the standard regulation to use 12 point by choosing for the 'children's' version a larger, possibly more accessible point as is common with children's books. Clearly the choice of font size is a semiotic decision (see. e.g. Kress, 2003 p.139).

The additional length is connected with the different linguistic resources Peter chooses in making each text. As displayed in Table 5.2 above, the essay tends towards a more compact, lexical density while the children's version employs the kind of looser, clause intricacy more usually associated with speech. These differences (clause complexity vs. clause intricacy) have been proposed by Halliday (e.g.1989) specifically in relation to differences between written and spoken language. 'The complexity of the written language is static and dense. That of the spoken language is dynamic and intricate. Grammatical intricacy takes the place of lexical density.' (p.87).

Extract 5.2 also features several uses of rhetorical questions typical of pedagogical interactions with their implication of writer as authority and knowledge holder. (e.g. But do we realise how often we use foreign words and phrases? or What country do you think of when you wash your hair?) Interestingly, this use of rhetorical questions was not noted by Hyland (2000) in his analysis of textbook discourse. Perhaps this particular resource is typical of textbooks for younger readers as they indicate a more explicitly pedagogic relationship than 'adult' textbooks might wish to express. Questions have the effect of attracting attention precisely because they seek reaction. Here, they are explicit demands for the reader to interact with the information in contrast to the essay which makes no obvious bid for reaction

² There is a growing literature on the visual display features of written or multimodal texts, particularly in relation to digital literacy. For instance, Abott, 2002, or Hillner, 2005

or response, presenting instead the information as asserted fact. Indeed, despite (or because of) the contentiousness of the two statements he makes in the essay, he allows no opportunity for the reader to respond. This stands in stark contrast to the regenred version where participation is required through the use of more explicit, and speech-like, interpersonal resources.

Other material differences between these two extracts concern grammar and vocabulary choices. For example, there is a shift from the passive '*English is littered with...*' in the essay to the active '*go around stealing words*' in the children's version. The latter choice of the word '*stealing*' further enhances this sense of activity and the named agent '*if the English can go around stealing...*'. Extract 5.2 also uses more colloquialisms, such as contracted forms (*that's only a start*) as opposed to the fully expressed forms in Extract One (*it is not necessary*) further enhancing the 'spoken' quality of the regenred version and the 'written' quality of the original version.

The different range of semiotic resources available to Peter in each of the two versions in these opening sections results in a shift in discursive identity and hence writer's agency. In the first extract, he appears as assertive but unwilling to engage with the reader while in the second, he seeks reaction. The writer of Extract 5.2 becomes more visible as a mediator of the information, a visible interface between the 'facts' and the 'interpretations'.

This suggests a adjustment in how empowered Peter felt in writing each and how confident he was in producing each version.

There wasn't so much of a paranoia about [writing the second version...]

While I was writing this one [version two] it wasn't the thought of having

someone telling me that I was wrong, rather telling me – Oh didn't you want to write this more advisory than ... (Peter)

Overall, the two versions differ because their social framing is different and therefore the need for different resources will differ. The function to inform in version two as opposed to the function to display in version one brought about by a change in writer's role, performer to informer, and hence the 'freedom' to develop ideas explicitly with examples and illustrations that enhance the intended ideological messages. A consideration of the next pair extracted from later in the two texts can further clarify this point. I have used 'bold' to pick out the two ideological messages to be considered.

Extract 5.3

Of all the languages to have influenced Swahili, English is perhaps the only one which continues to do so. Within the group of English loans there are many which I shall ignore here as they are used only by those engaged in a specific occupation and as a result cannot be said to be a true part of the Swahili vocabulary. **The British interest in Africa has been well documented. The colonisation of large tracts of East Africa by the British, beginning in the 1800s,** introduced many new words to the Swahili vocabulary, many of them concerned with aspects of colonial government and many concerning the new machinery introduced in the dawn of the industrial age.

Extract 5.4

So this leaves us with a chance to look at our own language, English. **The British became interested in Africa**

in the 1800's, a time when many European nations were trying to claim large parts of Africa for themselves. The British controlled huge areas of the continent, so much that you could walk from Cairo to Cape Town on British controlled land. Like those who came before them, they ruled the area as if it were Britain itself and as a result a large number of English words were introduced to Swahili. The British brought with them a host of new machines that had only just begun to be used in Britain. It was called the industrial age and Britain was leading the way with many inventions such as steam power. Because of this many of the words which were borrowed are to do with these new machines and gadgets. They also introduced words to do with the new form of government.

In Extract 5.3 the critique of British imperialism is barely visible, and indeed may only be visible to us because of its more explicit representation in the rewritten version. The indirectness of the first reveals nothing of the writer's opinion, presented as it is as a shared understanding (*...has been well documented*). Perhaps the choice of the phrase '*large tracts of land*' implies some kind of critique, but if it does it is very indirect. In Extract 5.4 the criticism is more explicitly presented (*The British became interested in Africa in the 1800's, a time when many European nations were trying to claim large parts of Africa for themselves.*). I do not intend to explore the degree of critique here as it is well outside the scope of this discussion, but the point I'm trying to make is that because the writer cannot assume his new readership to know

about the colonial past, he needs to explain it in order to make his point about the loan words. Once again, the shift in design leads to a change in the nature of the production manifested by the different resource needs of the readership. This then impacts on agency as the writer is forced to reveal himself more openly in Extract Four through the need to be more explicit. He has to put his mark on the text and, just as in the case of agency and the broken window above, the more we actually know about the writer himself, the more we can understand where he's coming from and why.

The final pair of extracts from these two pieces of work further clarify the difference in agency between them. In each case they are the final sentence of the text, the 'valedictory' statement, in fact. Unlike much of the rest of the two texts, these final statements differ not only in their use of semiotic resources but also in terms of their content. While in other sections new content in the rewritten version fills in the assumed gaps in knowledge (i.e. the children are not privy to the knowledge of the discipline etc.) here there is no obvious content correspondence.

Extract 5.5

With the prospect of many African languages falling to the wayside in the new era of globalisation it is good to see that Swahili continues to move with the times as it has always done.

Extract 5.6

So next time you hear a strange word, try and find out where it has come from, and try and use it again some time!

Extract 5.5 concludes with a global comment on the impacts of globalisation on languages, offering an optimistic evaluation about Swahili's ability to adapt to change. It is the kind of comment that might appear at the end of a 'popular' text and stands out from the more academically oriented focus of the rest of the essay. Nevertheless, it serves very much as a closing remark, a generalised and to some extent rather vague comment, which provides closure. In Extract 5.6 the writer has chosen a very different way to conclude. In this case his conclusion is somehow open. What is perhaps more important to this particular discussion, however, is the fact that in the children's version he produces a strongly didactic comment, directive in nature leaving the topic open for further investigation and extending its parameters beyond the confines of the text in hand. Here the discursive identity of the writer is of someone who has the authority to direct his readers in their future activity. It is a strongly pedagogised identity compared to that of the essay production.

In the example of Peter's work, there is, I suggest, a close relationship between the elements of design, production and distribution which constitute the communicative cycle (see Chapter Three). Each of the two genres afforded the Peter the chance to draw on different textual resources and the different social framings of the two genres led to a shift in discursive identity. In the essay, his task was to display information which was assumed to be already known to the reader in contrast to the second production where his job was to impart that information to a readership who is assumed not to know.

In the next section I will refer to Saskia's work to further explore these impacts on agency.

5.5. Saskia's Work

The second pair of productions were produced by Saskia who, as I have already stated, was also following the African Studies programme. She too chose to locate her new production in a talking to children context but, unlike the previous example, she used a dramatic genre to produce her work. Her essay task was to give an account of the origin and present day function of one African lingua franca which is, exactly what she did with the original essayist version.

Unfortunately, due to Saskia leaving the university before the end of the academic year in which this work took place, I was unable to interview her along with the other students involved in this study. Since that time I have had discussions with her which involved talking about this work, but none of these were recorded so I cannot refer to them in any detail. Despite her sudden departure, she did, in fact return to the university the following year and has now completed her BA studies successfully. I mention this because, unlike the other examples in my discussion, I have no quotes from Saskia. However, I want to include her work because I think it is a good example of how the regenring allowed a student whose essay lacked any obvious sense of writer's 'hand' the chance to express personal agency. Moreover, she provides a very detailed written introduction to her production which sets out her justifications for why she chose to reproduce the work in this way. I will, therefore, refer to this in connection with the analysis of her work.

The original essay, as I have already mentioned, appears to lack personal engagement and a reader might easily assume that the writer had little interest in the topic. However, on reading the new production, a very

different sense of involvement is evident and it would be, perhaps, difficult to recognise the writer of the essay as the writer of the play. As with Peter's work above, I compare the two versions of Saskia's work in tabulated format, illustrating differences in both the social and the material orientations Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

5.5.1 Comparing The Social Orientations

<i>The Social</i>		
<i>Contextual Orientation</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Dramatised Didactic Conversation</i>
Design	responding to client's design	designing for client
Production	Essayist (student essay)	dramatised didactic conversation
Distribution	For institutional assessment <i>normative</i> practice - reproduction of.. Evaluation against normative implicit disciplinary (and institutionalised) criteria and/ or values	For institutional assessment <i>alternative</i> practice - experiment - reconfiguration of... Interpretive effect - for assessment / evaluation against non-normative disciplinary criteria and /or values
<i>Discursive Orientation</i>		
Purpose	Display knowledge of client's design Display learning	Experiment with learning / writing Tell (teach) about Inform Entertain
Process	Acquire Reflect Reproduce	Reflect on information Reflect on experience Recontextualise

	Report	Create Inform Contend / Evaluate
Identity	Novice <i>as though</i> expert	Expert <i>as if</i> parent (Unwilling) pupils (<i>as if</i>) young children
Role	Performer	Informer (parent) Dissenter (children)
Agency	mediated disguised/ unidentifiable Intertextual	unmediated visible Interpersonal

Table 5.3

I will be returning to Saskia's work in Chapter Seven when talking about students writing themselves into their work – the kind of assertion of the student discursive identity referred to at the beginning of this chapter. In this chapter, however, I will focus on the alternative discursive identities Saskia constructed through the regenring process. For the moment, though, it is quite possible to see that the two genres, as with Peter's work, afforded different discursive opportunities as the result of their different contextual orientations. This is most particularly so because each involve discursive identities which are authoritative and this is reflected in the pedagogised discourse that typify each of these two regenred productions.

5.5.2 Comparing Material Orientations

As far as the material aspects of the productions are concerned, there are inevitably substantial differences between them as a result of the wide gap between essayist writing and dramatic writing. The first major difference arises because the play employs dialogue; that is speech to articulate the information which, as the next chapter will illustrate, affords very different kinds of meaning. I will not discuss this here, as I am currently concerned with the shift in agency resulting, I suggest from the use of different discursive identities. However, for the sake of exemplification, I will

indicate some of the key differences in use of material resources in Table 5.4. This will help to illustrate the ways in which the resources themselves facilitated this shift in agency.

<i>The Material</i>		
<i>Thematic Orientation</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Dramatised Didactic Conversation</i>
e.g. General characteristics of 'macro genre'	Descriptions, examples Essay management (introduction, 'body', conclusion i.e. sequence of information/ideas)	Interactions between characters, dialogues Narrative & stage management (sequence of events)
e.g. Specific characteristics of 'micro genre'	disciplinary features - e.g. linguistic concerns	Interactive 'story' telling
e.g. Specific characteristics of the work in hand	Swahili as a lingua franca examples of history and uses - presented as list	Didactic parent and argumentative, assertive children. Swahili as a lingua franca presented as political act, linked to discussion on linguistic terminology.
<i>Semiotic Orientation</i>		
<i>Genres</i>	Essay	Dramatic dialogue
<i>Modes</i>	writing (writtenness)	written speech / scripted speech (spokenness) characters, props, stage management
<i>Textual Materials</i>	impersonal forms (e.g. 'it' fronted, nominalisations, passive constructions) density of expression	personal forms - subject fronted, personal pronouns + impersonal forms where 'father' is 'recounting' the essayist information clause intricacy + clause

	/clause complexity	complexity during 'recount' sections
	disciplinary terminology - unexplained	disciplinary terminology explained + colloquial terms
	formal (writing-like) expression (e.g. full forms, subordination)	colloquial (speech) expression
	topically organised with no explicit threading	topically organised but strongly mediated by dialogic interactions (e.g. responses to questions, challenges, recapitulations)
	absence of interpersonal resources (i.e. no cohesive directives, lack of attitudinal markers, no links between topics)	frequent use of interpersonal resources, interruptions, agreements / disagreements
	explicitness as asserted fact- encyclopaedic information (e.g. no hedges)	explicitness - pedagogised information - didactic, directives (e.g. People need to learn...), approbation (e.g. That's a good question) hedges (e.g. perhaps it's to do with...)
	single formatting	mixed formatting

Table 5.4

Saskia herself, as Saskia the commentator on her own work, justified her genre switch in the following way – expressed in writing. I have chosen to italicise it in order to reflect the highly subjective nature of this extract which, although not obtained in interview, nevertheless reflects Saskia's intentions behind the work and her attitude to the whole experiment.

Introduction (Saskia's bold and subtitle)

I have chosen to present my account of Swahili as a lingua franca in the form of a short play, though almost a monologue. As I believe the use of a spoken medium to be appropriate in this instance in relation to Africa's strong oral culture. The subject matter can easily be adapted into a narrative account as it is an historical account of Swahili's development into a common medium of communication. On a personal level by re-crafting my existing essay I am given the opportunity to become more fluid with the concepts presented in it.

Saskia's desire for fluidity and the representation of 'Africa's strong oral tradition' within her own work is interesting in its own right and expresses the kind enthusiasm that is entirely lacking in her original essay. The following excerpt, which follows on from the above, further emphasises the point.

I propose to transform the essay into a bedtime story, being told by a parent to their two children. In doing so I am able to simplify the ideas and slip into a world that allows room for the imagination as well as the intellect.

She proceeds to establish an elaborate description of the characters and the set itself which further serve to clarify the social framing of the production. In fact, of course, the introduction is part of the production and must be taken together with what Saskia considered to be the main event, the dramatised representation of the essayist content. What the 'stage management' introduction achieves is to establish the circumstances in which the events of the play occur and the attitudes of the characters that express, not only the essayist information, but also an interactional quality that the essay lacks. In the play Saskia says much more *about* the topics of the essay than she managed to do in the essay itself. In the essay she refers to many

more topics but says very little about them which is what gives the essay its 'list like' quality.

There is also a marked difference between the versions in terms of how the content is managed. In the first example the organisational structure corresponds to the chronology anticipated by the assignment title. In the new version this disappears and is replaced by a structure which follows the flow of the dialogue. Further, because of the changed frame – explaining to children – the need to make the topic relevant (and accessible) is paramount. In this respect there is a similarity to Peter's reproduction above and it is, perhaps, this need for clarification and explicitness that best demonstrates the shift in identity from acquirer to informant. In other words, the student becomes teacher.

Saskia's introduction continues to provide more detail not only about the dramatic characters but also the set itself. Despite her own dismissal of its relevance, this provides a strong contextual framing for the drama that follows. It strengthens the sense of discursive identity of, particularly the interactants because it offers us an inside view of the family circumstances and attitudes. It also reinforces what is intended as a representation of a didactic experience, the experience of being taught and the experience of teaching.

Set:

The set is not of immediate significance to the piece; it must be minimal and modern with two single beds and an armchair to the left. Perhaps the beds could have patched work quilts on them and the wooden floor a Moroccan rug. A giant world map can be stuck to the walls behind the beds, with pins, scribbles and highlighter indicating places they have been, want to

go, or various important and trivial facts the children have learnt. Some of the visible toys should serve an education function and not be associated with popular culture. It is clearly a conscientious household striving to create a corner of individuality and safety in a contrary, consumer world. If there is the possibility of having a window, it should be to the right of the beds so that the parent can glance towards it in unconscious reference. Through the window should be a view of an intimidating grey city, harsh and cold against the bedroom warmth. The city serves as a contrast to the African world the parent talks about and represents the cruelty of reality against the fictitious world that is created with words.

Such detail would have no place in the essayist genre as the generic framing of an essay is generally taken as read. Here she obviously wanted to ensure that this new production would be understood within a very different kind of social frame, one which establishes the particular relations between the participants. The props imply a particular kind of home environment (the annotated world map, the Moroccan rugs, the patchwork quilts) while the dissonance between the urban landscape outside the window and the Africa of the imagination within the 'story' scenario. The meaning potential of all these items contrive to enhance the sense of personal control Saskia has in this second production in comparison to the first.

Ultimately the new production moves away from giving an 'account of' into a dialogue about the nature of language, of lingua franca and of the political agendas that might underlie them. It also manages to problematise the 'knowingness' of the parent through the reactions and responses of the children in the play, a theme I will develop in Chapter Seven. It incorporates elements of the 'real world' context of the time in which the production was

made; the bombing of Afghanistan following the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York.

5.5.3 Comparing Extracts

I now want to move onto comparing Saskia's two productions to demonstrate how the regenring allowed for a more visible presence of the writer even though the discursive identities were fictional fabrications. I will also refer to other extracts, but because I want to emphasise the issue of agency and discursive identity here I will not necessarily compare the extracts as 'sets' in the way that was possible with Peter above.

The two extracts below (5.7 and 5.8) represent the point in each production at which the topic, Swahili, is introduced. In the essay it is the opening paragraph whilst in the play it appears a short way into the script. What precedes it in the play is a brief series of exchanges between the father and the children which serve to establish that this kind of bedtime activity is the usual household practice. As in my discussion of Peter's work above, the essay extract comes first and the regenred extract comes second.

Extract 5.7

The word 'Swahili' is Arabic in origin and means coast. Swahili is spoken on the East coast of Africa by many as a first language and has spread into the interior as far as the Congo as a lingua franca. Though Swahili uses words adopted from Arabic, English and Portuguese, it has the definite structure of a Bantu language and is written in the Latin script.

Extract 5.8

Parent:

At this point seated in the armchair addressing the children.

"Can you remember what our bedtime story was about yesterday?"

Child 1:

"Yessssssssss! It was about

[six more exchanges]

Parent:

OK, anyway, today I thought I could tell you the story about how Swahili came to be such an important language in East Africa. People always talk about the importance of English as a world language but they rarely consider that there exists many other important non-European languages all over the world. People need to learn one of these important languages so they can talk to people who have different first languages to themselves.

Child 1:

"Umm... Why would they be speaking to people with a different language?"

Parent:

That's a good question you bright little spark! Now in the situation of Africa there are two hundred thousand different languages spoken. It's not like in England. In Africa if you go from one village to the next you are likely to find a different language"

The first extract serves to 'name' the topic and provides a generalised synopsis of its identity as a language. Unlike Peter's introduction above, there is no visible sense of the writer herself. The information is presented as unproblematic statement of fact. There is no explanation of terms such as 'lingua franca' and no opportunity is provided for interpersonal response. In other words, this information is not to be challenged or discussed. It simply

is. This is why I have described the discourse as encyclopaedic rather than conventionally essayist.

Such assertiveness might not seem to match with the uncertainty of the student as writer, but can, perhaps be explained by its similarity to textbook discourse. As Latour and Woolgar (1986) point out in their discussion of 'statement types' (pp. 75 – 88), textbook discourse tends to present information as uncontroversial fact, using unhedged assertions in contrast to 'authentic' professional disciplinary debates and arguments. Myers, (1992) suggests that because this kind of writing concerns the 'summation' of knowledge it tends towards a more strongly assertive impression and suggests that students need to become aware of differences between textbook genres and other academic genres. It is an issue which I pick up again in the next chapters, particularly because it is linked to the affordances of textual materials and the expression of personal involvement in disciplinary practice. This is the kind of involvement that Latour and Woolgar refer to when contrasting the discourses of laboratory discussion with those of textbook writing. (see also Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984/2003).

Saskia, like Peter, also makes a connection with English, but for very different reasons. Here it is simply to provide linguistic information whereas in Peter's work it was to challenge (imagined?) negative perceptions of languages such as Swahili.

In Extract 5.8, by contrast, Saskia uses the reference to English in much the same way that Peter did in both his productions; that is to make a socio-political point, something which is entirely missing from the essay. This kind of commentary is what gives the second version a personal identity. This does not mean that it is Saskia's own identity. She is not the father nor

is she the children. However, it is through these constructed discursive identities her own agency emerges. The interpersonal activity produced in the regenerated piece is necessitated by the chosen genre and the resources that it requires: the particular characters, speech interactions, the ebb and flow of conversation. In Saskia's case it allows her to introduce commentary and evaluation through the questions and reactions that the 'children' provide and consequently the responses that the 'father' is forced to make³. This stands in stark contrast to her first version in which, as has been suggested, lacks any sense of personal response to what she presents as information. It is unclear, in the former, who is being addressed, while in the second version addressivity is obvious. The following extracts (5.9, 5.10 & 5.11) chosen almost at random from the original essay will perhaps further clarify that point.

Extract 5.9

Swahili is presumed to have started its life in the region of the Tana River estuary and to have spread further when Arabs and Persians settled in the area due to trading, thus spreading the language along their trading routes. In 975 Ali Ben Sultan al Hassan Ben Ali bought the island of Kilwa in exchange for a few bails of textiles and it became an important trading centre encouraging the use of Swahili along the coast south of the Zambezi River. [...]

Or

³ See for instance Kress, 1994, *Learning to Write*, for discussion on how spoken communication demands/allows for shifts in flow of ideas resulting from instant feedback. Also Bakhtin as cited in Chapter Three.

Extract 5.10

There are a very large number of Swahili dialects that have derived from specific social situations, some of which are dying out because of a change in social circumstances. Due to the function of some of these dialects, such as the mode of common communication in the army and work force the dialect has undergone considerable simplification and lost much of its structure until it can only be called a pidgin...

In fact it is not until the final paragraph that we find any sense of evaluative comment.

Extract 5.11

As well as English influences Arabic continues to influence Swahili as a language and Swahili literary forms and songs. All though [sic] Swahili draws from other language sources it is seen as a nationalistic language and its success as a lingua franca in East Africa could be attributed to this and its strong association with the Africanism that evolved after gaining independence from colonial rule. **English's growing prestige as a dominant world language could be seen as a hindrance to Swahili's progression but it is difficult to imagine English ever performing the same functions of Swahili** in that Swahili has become a common medium for people of different vernaculars who other wise [sic] would have no means of communicating.

The comment on the potential role of English as a lingua franca had been touched on earlier in the essay in the context of discussing English as used in certain domains such as education and legal settings. However, it is only here that it is presented as an issue. By contrast, the regenred work is

strongly marked by comment and evaluation on numerous issues which arise out of the core discussion of Swahili. This is possible because of the specific type of discursive identities that Saskia constructed in the making of this work. The children, because they are children, are free to express strong unsupported opinions. The father, who is consciously politically aware and keen to teach his children appropriate ways of viewing the world, frees Saskia to represent political perspectives that she may or may not hold, but which serve to raise issues that relate to but allow for a more authentic explication of topics that she merely asserted in the essay.

Extract 5.12 below, for instance concerns the 'lingua franca' issue that Saskia refers to in Extract 5.11 above. However, in the regenerated version the topic is problematised more explicitly and the debate is fully realised within the interactions that occur between the parent and the children.

Extract 5.12

Child 2:

"Why doesn't everyone just learn English?"

Parent:

One of the main reasons why Swahili became important was because it is an African language. English was used in colonial times. Remember we have talked about colonialism before. When European took control of countries that never belonged to them. So you can imagine what native people think of English. Imagine if some country with a foreign culture took over England and made English people work for them, constantly asserting their power. You're probably not going to like their language because it will remind you of all the bad things they have done to your country. It was a bit like this in Tanzania. Swahili was seen in as a nationalist language, a way of retaining culture. If everyone spoke English don't you think the world would be a boring place. A language isn't just about words its about who you are. People who study language are called linguists and they believe if you study

a certain language you are able to learn about the way that the people who speak it think. If everyone just spoke English it would be like saying the English way is the only way to live your life!"

In comparing the two different versions it is difficult to remember that it is the same writer in each case with the same set of available sources of information. What is different, of course, is the difference in what each of the genres afford in terms of social and material orientation.

The visibility of agency (the father's, the children's) in the regenred work allows for a much stronger sense of writer's involvement than does the essayist version. The writer of the dramatised 'bedtime story', has a strong socio-political awareness and an emerging understanding of issues surrounding language and identity. The essay writer appears (or rather doesn't appear) to be a passive reporter of incontestable and uncontested facts compiled from an anonymous source or set of sources, despite their being listed at the end.⁴ Agency in the essay is that of authority reflected by the assertive discourse that the lack of interpersonal or modifying linguistic resources affords. Agency in the regenred work is everywhere made visible with the availability of resources afforded by the genre itself.

5.6 Conclusion

The two examples I have discussed here demonstrate how agency has become more visible in the new work. In neither of the Versions One was there much sense of who was writing the work, although as already discussed, this was less the situation in Peter's case and substantially more in

⁴ The issue of referencing is not my concern here.

Saskia's. However, once they moved into their new design the choices that were available to them facilitated a different experience. Agency becomes more visible through the new discursive identities that the writers create. This, I suggest, allows the writers themselves to work with the information more freely, unconstrained by their own lack of scholarly authority.

With the essays they are supposed to write as students but with the discursive identity of an expert who is supposed to have mastered '*a body of facts or ideas*' and is '*alert to contradictory arguments and points of view presented by different authors*' presenting '*answers in a succinct form without oversimplifying*' as suggested in the university handbook cited in earlier chapters. In the alternative productions they could write as anyone they chose with any amount of expertise and for any type of purpose.

The two students discussed in this chapter decided on a pedagogised frame while Andy, whose work I briefly analysed in the previous chapter, chose the discursive identity of a tabloid journalist. These choices freed them to write differently about the topics indicated by their essay assignments. It freed them to express ideas and opinions that they felt could not be expressed in essays which, for the perspective of the student, are a highly regulated genre. As the comment with which I began this chapter shows, the regenring allowed them to 'do it the way *you* wanted to' instead of the implied 'the way *they* want you to' (... having to reproduce facts and saying the right thing to get the marks) And despite the misrepresentation of the affordances of the essay that Peter's view represents, and I would argue that it is a common misrepresentation as discussed in Chapter Two, it is clear that the opportunity to write using these different genres was experienced positively among this particular group of students.

Writing essays requires students to adopt the discursive identity of an academic insider discussing particular issues in particular ways even though the writer may not be such. Offering the chance to write with a different frame of reference allowed the students in this study to develop a stronger sense of personal agency in relation to the information that they were working with. It doesn't matter if young children express strong opinions in unacademic ways, nor does it matter if children's information book writer adopts a didactic discourse in setting out what he considers to be important issues. It is perfectly acceptable for a journalist to make provocative remarks and it is understandable that a parent might want to 'indoctrinate' his children and his children might want to resist. The students created these particular discursive identities because they felt these would best allow them to rework the material in the original essays. However, these new identities could only emerge as a result of the genres that the students chose to frame their reproductions.

The overall result, despite the fact that they disguised their own identities under their constructed ones, was that there was a much stronger sense of agency in the regenerated work. Moreover although the visible agency was that of the constructed identities, the overall and highly visible hand in the work was that of the students themselves.

In the next Chapter I will look more closely at issues only touched on here concerning the affordances of the different modes that the genres demanded. In particular, I will consider how spokenness contrasts with writtenness in the making of knowledge and how the genre shift from essay to play led to shifts in the meanings that the students were able to express.

Chapter Six – Reconfiguring Information: transduction to transformation

I think what was satisfying was allowing myself or being able to digress – go off at a tangent - and develop something and then realise that that could be used and that actually produces something that is useful and gives a new form to what I'm writing and takes it in other directions. Anya

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I focused on the notion of writer's discursive identity and the relationship between this and agency. I argued there that a shift in genre allowed a shift in agency because the new genres also allowed students to adopt or create different discursive identities. This was not only confined to the examples included in the previous chapter, but through all the regenerated work, those I shall be referring to in this chapter too. In this chapter I want to focus on how the regenerating ensured a reconfiguration of the content of the essays; that is the information itself. What I want to show is that the affordance of the genres chosen meant that the writer had to do different things in dealing with the information and in so doing the what was said and how it could mean also changed.

The comment from Anya, above, expresses some of what I want to explore here; that is how the regenerating allowed things to happen. In Anya's case, the

genre she chose (a play) meant that she had to have characters. The characters she created established particular types of interactions and represented particular attitudes and opinions precisely because they had particular personal characteristics. This relates, of course, to the issue of discursive identity discussed in the previous chapter in that these characters allowed Anya to explore issues in ways that had been unavailable to her in the essay. However, the development of characters and the actions and the speech communication with which the content of the original essay was expressed also brought about changes in how that content could be experienced both by the writer and the reader.

For the purposes of this analysis I will be referring mainly to Anya's work which provides, I suggest, a good example of how different genres enforce different ways of making meanings even though the same content (material) being drawn on. However, I will also refer to other students' work as illustration of the ways in which certain aspects of the regenring afforded shifts in how the 'content' means. The way in which I have organised my discussion of the work reflects the kinds of effects, both social and material, which I believe the different genres afforded. As with the previous chapter, I will interweave my own analysis with comments from the writers and, in Anya's case, readers of her writing, because I find it helpful to let my analysis respond to the experiences of those involved in the communicative event in hand.

However, before moving into the detailed analysis I will refer back to certain discussions in Chapters Three and Four which concern the issue of semiotic resource choice and the making of meaning, particularly those relating to Kress's (e.g. 2003) concepts of transduction and transformation. This will help in focussing attention on the issue that this chapter is concerned with;

that is the effect of the material resources that the chosen genres imply. The examples I refer to here involve a shift in writtenness to spokenness as the result of the shift from written essay to written drama (play and radio phone-in) and hence other mode resources such as facial expression or gesture. In attempting to describe the kinds of shift that I want to focus on here, I will particularly explore the different textual resources that the writers chose as a consequence of the genres.

6.2 Transduction to Transformation

As already argued in Chapter Three, how we choose to produce the thing that we wish to communicate, let's call it information, is what makes the information *be* what it is. That sounds like a somewhat tautological argument. What I mean is that the means of production, the materials (genres, modes and media) from which the production is made as chosen by the producer, according to what she thinks will best represent her meaning in what circumstances and for what purposes etc., is inseparable from the production itself. Therefore it follows that if you take information that has been produced with one set of resources and re-present it using a different set of resources there will be a substantive shift in how that information means. The different expressions of the communication of the 'same' set of statistical information that I gave in Chapter Three illustrate this point.

Kress (e.g.2003) proposes the terms *transformation* and *transduction* to explain the processes involved in communicating meaning arguing that these concepts help us to understand better the relationship between the

interactions and actions involved. This explanation challenges transmission models of communication, which tend to ignore, or at least have difficulty in accommodating, the dynamic nature of communication. '...transformation is a much better explanation of processes of apperception and of integration [...] than are notions such as acquisition.' (p.46). Acquisition implies a kind of direct correspondence between 'output' and 'input' , to use technicist terms, between what the 'utterer' or producer 'says' and what the correspondent understands. By contrast, the concept of transformation allows for the effects brought about as soon as an 'idea' or 'thought' (text) is produced with the chosen resources. It relates to both the expression and the interpretation of the represented idea where each involves transformation¹.

Kress, discussing mode shift in a science class and the movement from written modes to visual modes, for instance, suggests that this kind of shift 'is not a process of transformation' but rather one of reconfiguration 'according to the affordances of a quite different mode'. (p.47) I would add that transduction is always a part of the communicative process. The shift between 'idea' which draws on one set of resources (mental?) and production as text which draws on a different set of resources, can be considered as 'transduction'. In my discussion I will further be suggesting that the process of shifting between genres is also one of transduction as this shift results in a shift in mode and in certain cases in media. My point is that *transduction* – that is how the text is produced, results in the *transformation* of what the text means and what it can do.

Wood (1999) complains, when discussing design student writing, that,

¹ See Chapters Three and Four for further discussion

Normal modes of essay logic are [...] of limited use except to focus the writer's attention upon issues and topics, or to represent existing design thinking in a more self-justifying and persuasive way. In short, these modes of writing are better for putting previous 'thought-actions' into words than they are at responding with new ones.' (Wood, 1999:8)

What Wood is expressing, I suggest, is the problem of transducting experience into writing as much as representing what he calls 'craftsguild' knowledge into essayist knowledge². Writing means differently to speaking and both mean differently to doing. In other words, different modes mean differently because they communicate with different textual resources. Of course the term 'textual' here is problematic because it usually implies verbal communication, but I want it to imply the nuts and bolts aspect of semiosis; that is the things with which the meanings are expressed whether it be words, grammars, colours, spatial arrangements and so on. I realise that this is part of a longstanding debate about terms and concepts, but rather than get into a discussion on semiotics per se, I want to look at what materials were used in what production with what effect.

I will now move on to examine Anya's work with examples from each of the two versions. As I have said, my aim here is to explore how the difference in material choices shifted how Anya was able to express her meanings. I will compare examples which deal with the same content to see how the different genres meant that different modes and textual resources were used and what the effect of this was on the information itself. In the course of the discussion I will pick out certain themes which I feel to be particularly important in

² He himself encouraged his design students to explore non essayist genres, as I have already mentioned in Chapter One. See Wood, 1999.

terms of the kinds of transformations that I suggest take place between each of the productions. And in particular I will focus on the different affordances of written and spoken communication which, despite the entirely written medium in which all the productions have been made, is a strong element in determining the choice of textual resources.

Next, however, I will look at how Anya and her other readers responded to the work. This discussion will provide a context against which I can examine her work. I will then give an overview of the different ways in which her productions are thematically organised, particularly with relation to how the premise of her discussions are established.

6.3 Attitudes Around Anya's Productions

The original essay, as has already been explained (Chapter Four) was from Anya's 'voice and place' unit which is where the lecturers talk about their own research practices and activities. In this case the topic revolves around 'anthropology of the built environment' and problematises the role of anthropology in that context. The two titles in Extract 6.1 immediately offer a clear example of how the two genres afforded the opportunity to think differently about the materials.

Extract 6.1

Snails and Other Gastropods

OR

How might anthropological considerations of the built environment lead to better understandings of issues such as social status, identity construction and nationalism?

The title of the play encapsulates the 'essence' of the essay question in its subsuming of the topic (built environment) into the metaphor of the snail. This is a fairly obvious link and indeed is a metaphor used by professional disciplinary writers cited in the essay itself as will be seen later on. However, I could also suggest that the full title of the play 'Snails and Other Gastropods' also refers to the title of a children's book by Gerald Durrell, 'My Family and Other Animals' and in order to understand this connection one would need to be familiar with that book too. Whether Anya meant this reference to mean anything I cannot say. What matters is that she has drawn on resources that afford the possibility of cultural resonance adding to its semiotic potential. I could further suggest that the cultural resonance of the title reference is also reflected in the familiarity with which students (and assignment setters) understand essay questions of which the one under discussion here is a classic example with its superficially tentative (How might...) but implicit assertion that anthropological considerations lead to a better understanding of the built environment.

Anya had felt the essay to be unsatisfactory. " *It [the rewrite] made me realise what I knew already – what was wrong with the essay*". Generally she had felt that she hadn't considered certain points fully, despite the essay being 'too long' by the criteria laid down for the course. There was also a kind of

frustration in that she felt she was replicating 'knowledge' rather than 'creating' it, a point already discussed in earlier chapters. With the essay she felt she had to fulfil the expectations of an academic discourse using the 'words', having a 'clear structure' or sounding 'clever'. By contrast, writing the play allowed her to approach the content very differently – in fact it forced her to take a different approach as indicated by her comment 'had to have' in the extract below.

*'I think I also had much more, **had to have** a take on it – a position that I could get away with - not really taking in the essay - and I think it does - presenting those theories in that way - um make them much more concrete, much more. Because these characters – these snails and young women whatever – were saying them, it connected it to the reality of what they were talking about because they were constantly subjectifying and talking about their lives and which doesn't happen with [essays] – you know they make generalisations - but not in the same way that an academic or anthropological text would.'*

For Anya, the dramatic genre forced a reconceptualising of the information in 'more concrete' ways, 'connected to reality' rather than the 'compiling' approach that she had mentioned when talking about essays.

However despite Anya's negative feelings about the original essay, it was highly valued in by her 'academic' reader, the assignment tutor. She was awarded the highest grade (A) and the main feedback comment was as follows:

Anya, this is an excellent essay, very clear and sophisticated and you have a good writing style which combines ethnography and the theory excellently. The various conceptualisations of built space is also novel.

Equally, the regenred version, the play, was met with a very positive response by a disciplinary reader, the topic lecturer who was also the person who commented on the problem of transgressing disciplinary boundaries cited at the beginning of Chapter Four :

'...it was evident that she had read widely and this is a perfect example really- of a student – incredibly in the first year – who was able to take these ideas and manipulate them in a very creative way – incredibly creative way – so it was both academically erudite and I think that it was simply entertaining'

He himself commented on the resources she had drawn on to present the various thematic content and go beyond a replication of topics contained in his original lecture:

'What's wonderful about this is that it gave Anya the possibility to explore these [themes] in a creative way but also attach the theory of the ideas to characters who interacted with each other and discussed or argued about certain issues, you know like – What is anthropology? What is nationalism? um – What is a house and an identity? – I mean there's more than just my lecture in there – there's lots of lectures in this paper.'

And indeed, a comparison of the two versions allows us to see what he means. The different range of semiotic resources available to each genre ensured that the productions themselves differed substantively in terms of content, of focus and perspective and of what could be included and how. Although the design, the assignment question, was the same, the shift from essay to play ensured a process of transformation through transduction in the ways I have suggested above and earlier in this thesis. The changes were on both a representational level (e.g. the shape, the textual resources, the modes) and on an affective level, by which I mean the meanings that were possible (meaning potential). Moreover, in the same way that the examples in the previous chapter illustrate a shift in how agency was expressed and experienced, this was also a strong aspect of Anya's productions. In this case, however, the writer of the play was actually a play writer as opposed to an 'as if' play writer. The writer of the essay, as with the previous examples, was a student writing *as if* expert, as discussed in the last chapter. In the regenerated work Anya was forced to 'take a position' on the content, something that she felt she couldn't get away with in the essay.

6.4 Themes, Topics and Management of Information

In this section I will look at how Anya sets out her ideas based on the original assignment question: *How might anthropological considerations of the built environment lead to better understandings of issues such as social status, identity construction and nationalism?*

6.4.1 Focus on The Essay

Both the essay and the play start off by problematising of anthropological methodology. Of course, they do this in very different ways, but essentially the opening sections of each fulfil this function. In the essay, however, the thematic orientation is clearly established in the introduction and key anthropological themes identified. Throughout, there is a coherence to the organisation as it moves from one theme to the next, each setting up the following one in a way allows a systematic consideration of each of the assignment topics. In extract 6.2 below, which is how Anya begins her essay, she gives an explicit indication of how she will be responding to the question and lays out before the reader the approach that she intends to take. I have indicated this in bold. This is what I call the essay promise which can be very reassuring to the lecturer who reads the piece, provided, of course, that the promise matches his own expectations.

Extract 6.2

Fieldwork methodology has undergone vehement inside and outside criticism over the past decades, and as a discipline, anthropology has been compelled to question and reappraise its approach. Consequently, there is an intensified concern amongst social scientists to submit rigorous, comprehensive research, by unfolding the many layers surrounding a specific aspect of culture.

Often we do not fully attend to our environments, 'we do not examine them but breathe them in' (Day 1990 : 10) – 'great monuments shout their presence and instil feelings of awe and wonder, yet a familiar environment is taken for granted' (Mike Parker Pearson and Colin Richards 1999 : 3).

An anthropological consideration of the built environment would pose a range of questions regarding how and why it was formed, what it represents and expresses and what its effects are on society.

This study will approach these questions with the intention of gleaning some elucidation as to issues of social status, identity construction and nationalism.

It will be initially concerned with the domestic and work spaces, to then reflect on the impact of architecture and urban planning within the wider environment. After examining its effects on social identity, the role of the built environment in terms of national identity construction will be considered.

Anya's introduction is certainly of the kind that would enable her reader to relax. As one of my lecturer informants put it, '*if the first paragraphs show a critical approach to the question*' in response to my question asking at what point they might relax when reading students' work. In this extract it is clear that Anya has identified the themes that she intends to cover, closely matching those listed in the question itself, and the opening phase, which refers to a disciplinary issue shows that she has identified with the disciplinary concerns. I will discuss this aspect in more detail in Chapter Seven when considering the visiblising of practice. For the moment, however, I want to focus on how Anya organises her work around the themes that she has identified.

As the work progresses it moves into the kind of compilation process that Anya describes in the following:

I may have had the thought and then I'll come across something that's very similar but instead of just having a short paragraph paraphrasing that and then maybe quoting something at the end, I think, sometimes out of laziness because I haven't left myself enough time or I just can't be bothered to think about how I can rephrase this, I'll just quote and then add another quote by somebody else [...] But

I think....but I think that sometimes I kind of shoot myself in the foot because it seems that I'm just compiling quotations but quite often that's not really what I'm doing, but maybe cos I think it's more convincing if I quote somebody famous.

It annoyed her because it made her feel she wasn't doing herself justice. She felt she wasn't really showing that she herself knew these things and had these understandings. An example of this 'compilation' is illustrated in the following extract taken from about a third of the way into the essay.

Extract 6.3

In many settings across the globe great significance is accorded to the type of structure one inhabits. As Sircar's 1987 study shows, 'the ranking of 'detached', 'semi-detached', 'terrace' and 'flat' in Britain indicates the amount of space, garden area and privacy which are indicators of social position (Pearson and Richards 1999 : 8). These authors go on to write that 'the match between social classes and house types may not be absolute, but the hierarchical classification of dwellings acts as a totemic system of moral and social taxonomies for the British class structure, both exemplifying it and reinforcing it' (1999 : 8).

However, what Anya herself perhaps fails to recognise is that she does much more than merely compile. While it is true that information in this essay is presented as a collection of citations, it is also interwoven with reformulations which clarify and move the reader onto the next citation. She links the ideas with a commentary thread and it is this organisational methodology is that makes the essay hers. The above extract, for example, is linked to the next set of quotes with a summarising comment (As the dwelling is a representation of the self, the status quo and the household as a collective entity,

so is often its placement within a particular neighbourhood or landscape [see extract 6.4 below). This comment serves to synthesise not only what has just been said but locates that in what has been said previously. Furthermore, it acts as a signpost, to use a rather clichéd term in the study of academic writing, one that is double directional, pointing backwards and forwards.

Extract 6.4

As the dwelling is a representation of the self, the status quo and the household as a collective entity, so is often its placement within a particular neighbourhood or landscape.

Andrew Turton's 2000 study of social identity in Thai states evokes, by its very title, the notions of 'civility' and 'savagery' with which the Thai people classify their environment...[followed by a series of quotes and paraphrases]

This kind of intertextual activity in academic texts has been studied in detail by, for instance, Hyland (2000), whose work analysed a substantial body of academic texts from a range of different disciplines. He suggests that 'The embedding of arguments in networks of references not only suggests an appropriate disciplinary orientation, but reminds us that statements are invariably a response to previous statements and are themselves available for further statements by others' (p.21). His research demonstrates that this discursive practice is very strong in fields such as sociology and philosophy to which anthropology is closely identified. Admittedly, Hyland was talking about published articles by 'experts', but as already discussed in earlier chapters, the student writer feels somehow that they are shadowing the 'real thing'; that is, the published article. In the case of the student writer, it is likely that they (and possibly their readers) would view referencing as

'suggesting an appropriate disciplinary orientation' rather than that their own statements 'are available for further statements by others.' (Hyland, *ibid*).

It is likely that Anya's success in drawing together the citations in this way is what attracted the positive feedback from her 'official' reader. It indicates that she has managed to understand and synthesise her reading and that she can, moreover, use this type of synthesis in the development of an ongoing discussion. In other words, she is showing that she has 'mastered' the 'relevant body of knowledge' and presented it in her 'own terms' as articulated in the departmental guide introduced earlier on in this discussion.

6.4.2 Focus on the Play

By contrast, the play, which covers a greater range of information, is almost entirely a synthesis not only of a relevant body of knowledge based on disciplinary reading and lectures, but relevant knowledge based on experience. Despite the fact that the play follows a similar sequencing of the topics, the shape of the play entailed a *reconfiguration* of the information and in the process brought about a change not only in how much but what type.

It is impossible to give an impression of how the play was thematically organised without a full reading but the following extract, which comes in Act Two, establishes a kind of expectation by indicating the narrative (thematic) orientation that the play will take.

Extract 6.5

[Boris is being given a 'work placement' by careers advisor, Austin Tatus]

Boris : Urrrr...I don't understand, Sir...

Austin Tatus : Quite, quite! Well those are the kinds of issues the A.A have been scratching their heads over for years...and when I realised these two fellows were members of that very club, well!...It all just seemed to slot beautifully into place!

Boris : How, Sir?!...

Austin Tatus : Your first utterances, boy! Why, they are at the very crux of the A.A's raison-d'être!

Boris : Oh...Sir...What's the A.A?...

Austin Tatus : Ah, yes!...Well, you see, there is a club of humans called the A.A -Anthropologists Anonymous that is - **and they've been schlepping around the world for a number of years, asking all those questions that you articulated as a mere infant...However, some people weren't too chuffed about the way they were doing things - some even said they should lay off anthropology and fieldwork altogether, give it up! - which made them very sad because they believe it can really help to understand their world. Presently, they are looking to recruit someone with a different approach, someone fresh, someone who will be more...objective ...,although there is some disagreement about the latter...Well! I suppose you could try, at any rate! And I should imagine your indiscriminatory stance with regards to the infinite world of colours would stand you in good stead...All in all, I think that you , dear boy, would make the perfect candidate!**

Boris : I...Do you really think I could do it, Sir?...I mean, I've never...

Austin Tatus : Of course you can! Rise to the challenge, my boy! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose! And I think I've come across just the right research topic for you...although I cannot disclose its exact nature at present – I'm sure you'll understand that, like any club, the A.A has its rules and regulations to abide by...Anyway, there is a division of the A.A at a place called S.O.A.S (Save Our Anthropologists' Souls) in London, U.K - and that is where I'll be sending you to collect your assignment! I do hope this is all agreeable with you as I've taken the liberty of contacting some of the members on your behalf, and I managed to yield an unconditional offer for you! What do you say to that?...

This phase indicates what the disciplinary issue is (However, some people weren't too chuffed about the way they were doing things - some even said they should lay off anthropology and fieldwork altogether, give it up! -which made them very sad because they believe it can really help to understand their world.), just as the introduction to the essay does. It also implies that the protagonist will be expected to find answers to the problem that is posed by the disciplinary issue. However, it does not provide the promissory mapping which identifies the thematic orientation of the work. This unfolds as the play proceeds and the protagonist encounters the 'topics' during his quest.

6.4.3 Affordance and Organisation

Organisation is one way in which the affordances of the essay differs in comparison to the affordances of the play. The essay affords the chance to set out the whole before discussing the parts. This is, perhaps, a way of economising and a way of not only being explicit but also of being 'worked'.

By this, I mean that the writing of an essay, and indeed of most academic texts, at least in English³, is to ensure that the reader is aware of purpose and direction at all times. If the purpose of an essay is to display knowledge, then it is important that the knowledge it is displaying is clearly identified. In the case of a play, the purpose may be quite different. In this play we have an unfolding narrative enacted by the structure and activity entailed in the production itself. It is not a 'Columbo' detective type of play where the dénouement is revealed from the outset, like in an essay, but rather a quest where a goal is established and a journey is to be made. All we can understand is that it is likely that the protagonist will encounter different experiences on route to the goal, whatever that may be. It is in this sense that there is a promise; the promise that there will be some kind of outcome involving a series of experiences.

A further function of the promissory statement in an essay is to establish the way in which the topics will be organised. In Anya's case, responding to the question, she identifies the issues of gender, identity, social status and nationalism through the lens of the built environment. The thematic arrangement in the introduction, which lists the topics in the order in which she discusses them is also typical of essay genres. (It will be initially concerned with the domestic [1]⁴ and work spaces[2], to then reflect on the impact of architecture and urban planning [3] within the wider environment. After examining its effects on social identity [4] , the role of the built environment in terms of national identity construction [5] will be considered.) This thematic organisation, set out so clearly in her introduction, is a necessary process in most academic

³ Other language cultures produce such texts differently. For instance, Japanese texts use a different organisational arrangement with no or at most limited reference to the purpose of the discussion and/or the attitude of the writer towards the discussion until the end of the text. See, for instance, Hinds, 1983 and his discussion of 'reader responsible' writing. Following Hinds, I have suggested that English written texts are writer responsible.

⁴ I added the numbers to indicate the sequence in which she discussed each topic

writing as it allows the writer to control the plethora of information that is out there. It is one of the most important authorial tasks and represents the mediative quality that is inherent in writing. Whether the introduction is produced at the chronological outset of the writing project, or added at the end is immaterial in terms of how the finished production is received. What matters is the effect it has on suggesting an ordered, coherent process of thinking, provided, that is, that the rest of the discussion actually does deal with those things in the way promised.

Having considered some aspects of thematic orintation⁵, I want to now focus on the the effects of the newly available semiotic resources; that is the semiotic orientations of the different genres.

6.5 Spokenness vs. Writtenness: an issue of length?

One of the most immediate differences between the two versions concerns length and was something that the lecturer whose lecture had inspired Anya's choice of topic commented on.

I suppose first of all I think one of the problems with the text as a submission for coursework and being honest is that it's just too long.

A simple word count, not to mention the material thickness of the submitted versions, shows that the play is over five times longer than the essay, partly as a reflection of the 'spokenness' of the dramatic production in contrast with

⁵ Thematic orientation is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

the 'writtenness' of the essay. Kress (1994) refers to this aspect of speech, made visible through transcription, when compared to writing. He suggests that this is partly to do with the different structural features of spoken and written communication but also to do with the immediacy of interpersonal interactions that speaking (with others) involves.

As I have suggested in Chapter Three, communication is a collaborative phenomenon involving the negotiation of meaning between participants and the semiotic choices they make. If there is a to-ing and fro-ing between the participants in the making of the different meanings, then it is likely that the information will 'take longer' to say. Furthermore, the textual resources used in speech differ substantially from those used in writing. For instance, in writing, there is, as Kress points out, a kind of explicitness which is necessary to cater for the absent reader. In other words, the writer has to imagine or anticipate the reader's interactions and respond to them within the frame of the written production. In speech, however, the 'other' is present and visible (unless on the telephone) and the speaker can adapt and modify the information depending on the actual feedback. Furthermore, Kress (*ibid*, p. 23) argues, 'Spoken texts may leave information implicit because the speaker knows what the hearer knows and because he can assess as he speaks whether he has been correct in his assessment.' This, he suggest, means that speech can be more implicit and less elaborated than writing. In the case of Anya's two productions it is partly the features of spoken language (as represented in the play), its unpackedness, that ensure its extra length whereas it is the density of written language (as represented in the essay) that lead to the economy.

A written play, is of course, writing, but the writer in this case seeks to replicate the experiences of 'live' communication through the resources she

chooses to draw on; that is characters, events and so on. Every utterance in a play is a *response* to a previous utterance and is framed by the circumstances in which it takes place as suggested by my 'cycle of communication' chart in Chapter Three. The way in which spoken communication moves depends on the interactions between the participants and the outcomes, or rather the directions the conversation goes may or may not be anticipated. Of course, the genre will imply direction, but this can always be subverted with an unexpected interpretation as suggested by the Table 2.1 (Chapter Two) illustrating communicative interactions.

By contrast, in an essay each utterance is part of a network of other utterances the writer has produced in the making of the written text. The whole production is a response to an external utterance (the essay question) and this response needs to be understood as a whole. The interactions as expressed in an essay are between the writer and her absent reader, and between the other people cited as already mentioned above, and, because the essay reader is absent and the 'criteria' against which the 'responses' are judged are difficult to express with any clarity (see Chapter Two), the essay writer works in a kind of communicative vacuum. By contrast, through the affordances of the play, the writer can construct an 'authentic' dialogue that moves the expression of the content through a series of responses to explicitly articulated utterances. Bakhtin's (1986) discussion of this usefully expresses the kinds of interactions that I am talking about.

... all real and integral understanding is actively responsive and constitutes nothing other than the initial preparatory stage of a response [...] and the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding. [...] Moreover, any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. (p.69)

However, it is not this alone that led to the discrepancy in length. As the result of the affordances of the genre; the demands of constructing a narrative, character development, scene setting and so on, other themes, which had not been referred to in the essay, or which had been referred to only in passing, emerged. These themes, which emerged out of 'writing a play' had to be carried through and resolved alongside the original themes of the essay. This inevitably meant that the text would be longer – or, in terms of communicative economy, take longer to 'say'. Moreover, as I will discuss below and particularly also in the next chapter, in the course of writing the play new ideas emerged out of the actions and interactions that occurred.

6.6 Meaning Differently: transduction to transformation

In contrast to the last chapter, I am not here concerned particularly with the issue of discursive identity and agency, although these play a major part in how Anya experienced her work and indeed how her work can be experienced. Inevitably reference to this arises out of the comments she and others make about the work, but as my main focus is on the resource implications of the choice of genre I will try to keep my attention there. Table 6.1 below, which represents the different semiotic orientations of the two versions, displays the difference in mode and examples of the consequent uses of textual materials for each. I have included length as a mode although I realise that this might raise eyebrows⁶. Nevertheless the

⁶ In fact, Kress has expressed his doubt about length or word number as mode in a recent personal conversation.

difference in word number which in turn resulted in a difference in physical length was commented on by a disciplinary reader ('it is simply just too long') and adds a spatial dimension as well as a social dimension to the way in which it can be received. It feels long because it *is* long and it transgresses student essay convention in that it exceeds 'acceptable' word number limitations.

<i>The Material</i>		
Semiotic Orientation	Essay	Play
Modes	<p>writing (to be read) / writtenness</p> <p>characters (writer, cited sources, reader)</p> <p>Length (2000 words approx.)</p>	<p>written speech (scripted dialogues) / spokenness</p> <p>characters (fictional and 'real')</p> <p>director's notes/stage management depictions (e.g. gestures, actions, voice pitch & tone)</p> <p>props (e.g. household objects, plane tickets, costumes)</p> <p>locations (e.g. park bench, internet café)</p> <p>Length (10,600 words approx.)</p>
e.g. Textual Materials ⁷	<p>Clause complexity</p> <p>'it' fronted passives, nominalisations, embedded questions</p>	<p>Clause intricacy</p> <p>Subject fronted structures, direct questions</p>

Figure 6.1

The differences between the columns as displayed above occur because of the choice of genre; that is the two genres give rise to the modes which, in

⁷ These will be discussed in detail below

turn, give rise to particular textual resources. Although in the previous chapter I contrasted selections of textual resources displayed as above, in this chapter I want to deal with them somewhat differently. This is because here I want to focus on how the different textual resources reflect the modes that give rise to them and hence the genres which have provided the framing for the whole production. The comparison of mode above gives an intimation of the different kinds of textual resource that will be used in the productions. However, it is not always possible to set one textual resource in opposition or even equivalence to another given the different range of modes that are available to each genred production.

Perhaps I need to re-clarify my use of the concept mode here given that both versions are produced as written texts. (See Chapter Four for original explanation) What I want to suggest is that despite the writtenness of the productions, it is possible to infer different communicative modes. For example, I have suggested a 'character' mode for both the essay and the play. This is because each production involves participant interaction. In the case of an essay, the interactions take place between the writer and the reader but also between the writer and the many other writers that she has cited. The textual resources in this case concern interpersonal features such as adverbial sequencers (next, after that) or attitudinal links (however, furthermore). I also want to include features such as the way in which cited authors are inserted into the discussion (e.g. as X says, according to...). This aspect of modality also occurs in the play as the creation and construction of fictional (and 'real') characters. The textual materials associated with these characters are, however, different to those in the essay because of the difference in genre. A play requires enacted dialogue as opposed to embedded dialogue. It therefore adopts speech mode rather than written mode, hence my

inclusion of spokenness with reference to the play and writtenness with reference to the essay.

I want to use the same arguments for the other mode categories that I have suggested. This is because I suggest that they all have an impact on the textual materials available and the ways in which meaning is communicated. Speech draws on different textual resources compared to writing, props (albeit described in writing) are experienced as visual and tactile items. In this way, I think I can justify the range of mode reflected in the play as opposed to the essay. I appreciate that this is problematic, but it helps me to identify how each production affords different meaning. The following example will, I hope, illustrate the affordances of the modes of characterisation, stage directions, props and settings.

Extract 6.6 comes from the essay and represents the introduction of a new thematic issue, that of women's isolation in the domestic space. In the essay, the point is developed with references to research

Extract 6.6

Research on the isolated and isolating nature of the housewife's role in Western society concludes that this seclusion is due to the privatised manner in which housework is performed.

In the play this theme is introduced by the following stage management notes which produce a visual representation.

Extract 6.7

[At this, the woman they are sharing the table with lifts her melancholic glance from the depths of her mug of tea, and directs a steady but weary look at Boris. Hitherto silent, she suddenly interjects.]

Of course, without the context it is difficult to understand the relevance of the visual image, but in context, it becomes clear that this image (the woman with a melancholy glance, the depths of the mug of tea, the weary look) is the setting up of the meaning of isolation. The issue of her melancholy is later revealed to be due to loneliness (she has no children and is a 'South Asian' living in a 'Western' city) and her being in this particular location, earlier established by the prior stage directions below,

Extract 6.8

[They all file into the *Someplace Else Café*. It is lunchtime and very crowded, so they ask a woman sitting on her own if they may share the table with her, she acquiesces. They order a large pot of tea.]

offers a challenge to the depiction of the (poor) isolated woman stuck in the domestic space which was cited in the essay. As the character, Sudipta, herself puts it:

Extract 6.9

Sudipta: [...] I'm lonely, you see, so I come to *Someplace Else* to drink my tea...I like to look into my mug of chai, deep down at my reflection, it's sunny in there, it reminds me of home...and lots of people around me...

In this way, the visual resources expressed with the verbal (written) directions, expresses meanings in ways which transform the essayist

meanings. This is, I suggest, an example of how mode shift brings about the process of transduction referred to above.

In the next section I want to compare two extracts which represent a particular topic in the assigned essay; that of definitions of the 'home'. This is a fundamental theme for both the essay and the play, which is why I have selected it. An analysis of each extract allows me to identify certain textual resource differences between them. This then gives me the chance to demonstrate how the different genres led to different mode and textual choices which in turn resulted in very different communicative experiences in terms of meaning potential. I have, of course, already indicated some of these shifts in the discussion above, but now I want to provide a more specific analysis.

6.7 From Assertions ...

The concept of 'home' plays an important role in each production, as already indicated although the essay question itself does not specifically prioritise it as a main theme. In fact, in the essay, although it is dealt with in some detail, it does not seem to be more foregrounded than the other major topics (the work place, gender, public spaces etc.) In the play, however, it becomes more dominant, particularly as its expression is personified by the hero of the piece, Boris the Snail. In fact, the 'home' provides the narrative thread for the whole play and, as it transpires, provides the quest goal. As in any good quest story, Boris does not travel alone. He acquires a band of fellow travellers, each of whom represents a particular thematic issue (attachment

to the 'home' (Holly), the workplace and personal identity (Michael) and the issue of domestic isolation and gender (Sudipta)). His companions provide Boris with the necessary insight to work his way towards the goal which, also typical of quest stories, is other than what it originally seems. A classic example of this is, of course, *The Wizard of Oz*. In Boris's case, the stated goal is the writing of the essay, but in fact, the 'true' achievement, as it turns out, is liberation from the 'home' and its weighty baggage as represented by him emerging from his shell, literally leaving his home behind.

In both extracts below, the writer explores the concept of 'home'. However, the resources with which this exploration is achieved differs greatly as the result of the genre effect. In the essay the topic is discussed with reference to and citations from the work of various researchers whereas in the play it is achieved through a combination of actions, interactions, speeches, observations, characterisations and stage management devices. What in the essay is information as reported, in the play becomes information as experienced which is an issue that I develop in Chapter Seven.

The extract from the essay (Extract 6.10) comes immediately after the introduction. In other words it can be considered the first topic to be discussed. Extract 6.11, which is from the play, also represents the first topic to be referred to and in fact, the essay and the play match each other in topic sequencing.

I will start off by analysing the essay extract paying particular attention to the resources used in its production. These, I will suggest, typify the student essay genre which, as I have suggested in earlier chapters, appears to 'shadow' professional academic writing. I want to show how the choice of textual materials (structures, lexis, cohesive devices etc.) mark it out as

'belonging' to the genre and how those choices impact on the meaning of the work and the meanings that the writer is enabled to make. I will then go on to examine the extract from the play and compare how the meanings are transformed as a result of the affordances of the new genre.

Extract 6.10

Most housing, across the globe, is made by people for themselves. 'Environments are thought before they are constructed' (Rappaport 1980 : 298) and 'man builds in order to think and act' (Preziosi 1983). The 'immobile' home stands for a desire to fix a centre, it is a will to grasp orientation, order and identity. Thus, the dwelling can be interpreted as an elaborate metaphor for the concept of human identities. In Dovey's words, 'to be at home is to know where you are; it means to inhabit a secure centre and to be oriented in space ' (1985:36) The home can be perceived as a microcosm for the whole world, where human statuses and the central beliefs of a culture are represented through material design. Man strives to fix a centre, a 'focus' amongst the chaos. The organisation of domestic space is a cultural process that translates systems of classification. Dichotomies such as private : public, clean : dirty, front : back have cultural variations and are conformed to accordingly, in different settings, as shows R.J Lawrence's comparative study of Australian and English domestic environments. 'Thus, the structuring of a home is not an unalloyed expression of 'individuality' but is 'predicted by age, gender, class, ethnicity and other aspects of social context' (Pearson and Richards 1999 : 7).

One of the first things to be noticed is that the extract is strongly assertive as have been all the essays involved in the study. In the previous chapter I

referred to the work of Latour and Woolgar (1986) and Myers (1992) in accounting for this kind of assertiveness and suggested that it might derive from the textual genres that early university students have been exposed to. The discourse of textbook writing may account in part for this assertiveness, although, as already discussed, textbooks also tend to pedagogise information, which is an aspect that does not seem to be so strongly featured in the essays.

So what are the textual materials that seem to make this extract so assertive? The strongest expression of assertiveness in this extract is the use of the connective '*thus*' which appears in two places in this extract. The first occasion links two related points; one which appears to be a summarisation of a disciplinary definition of the 'immobile home' and the other which appears as Anya's own inference from the first point. (The 'immobile' home stands for a desire to fix a centre, it is a will to grasp orientation, order and identity. **Thus**, the dwelling can be interpreted as an elaborate metaphor for the concept of human identities.) Here the use of the connective serves the purpose of indicating synthesis of ideas and suggests a strong correspondence between the points. It also shows both *that* and *how* Anya has interpreted (mastered) the ideas she's been reading about. However the second incidence achieves a rather different result.

In the second case the '*thus*' is not actually Anya's '*thus*' but rather it belongs to somebody else (Pearson and Richards). The quotation which this '*thus*' opens is used to summarise the points that Anya has just identified and acts as the conclusion to the introduction itself; thereby occupying a very strong position. ('Thus, the structuring of a home is not an unalloyed expression of 'individuality' but is 'predicted by age, gender, class, ethnicity and other aspects of social context'). The quotation is very strongly assertive in its own right

clearly affording a strong correspondence between what has preceded the word and what follows. However, the strong correspondence indicated by the second '*thus*', Pearson and Richard's one, is to a different series of points. The second '*thus*' is part of a different discussion, one that occurs outside Anya's one. However, despite this disjunction, the overall effect of this extract is one of categorical certainty, reinforced by the unassailability of the use of this connective and these definitions of 'the home' appear unchallenged and possibly unchallengeable.

The strongly affirmed agency implied with the use of a connective like '*thus*' in this extract contrasts with the seemingly weak agency when reformulating and interpreting the ideas she has cited. For instance she hedges strongly with modalised passive structures (can be interpreted as, can be perceived as) in stark contrast to the strongly assertive use of the stative present with which the information being interpreted is expressed. (e.g. The 'immobile' **home stands for** a desire to fix a centre, **it is a will to** grasp orientation, order and identity.). The 'can be interpreted' is, perhaps intended to tone down the rest of the extract though it could equally be an indicator of Anya's own unwillingness to commit herself to the interpretation she offers.

A further feature of this extract is the binary relationship that Anya uses. Discussion is arranged around dichotomies ('private : public', 'clean : dirty', 'front : back') which are further added to later in the essay with other (anthropological) dichotomies ('permanent – temporary', 'inside - outside', 'intimate – impersonal'). Such pairings offer an opportunity for comparison and is a textual resource which is common in both expository and discursive writing. (See e.g. Martin, 1993). It affords an economical way of establishing thematic organisation but more importantly allows for particular conceptualisations to be highlighted and encourages reflection on each part

of the binary set through consideration of difference. It is a fundamental tool in the researcher's repertoire in whatever disciplinary field.

The issue of disciplinary affiliation is also an important aspect of student essay writing, as suggested in Chapter Two. Anya's essay is a very good example of work which expresses a strong disciplinary affiliation. This particular extract sets out a definition of the 'home' which is clearly not the kind of definition that might spring to mind spontaneously, unless you were an anthropologist. It is not bricks and mortar, nor is it a place where a family lives. It is, instead, '*an elaborate metaphor for the concept of human identities*' a definition which is steeped in anthropological identity. I do not know whether this is Anya's own definition or whether it is a synthesis of what she has read, but it perfectly represents the 'mastering' of the body of knowledge referred to in earlier chapters. It is an entirely disciplinary conceptualisation, similar to others in this extract (e.g. 'domestic environment', 'fix a centre'). It is not referenced, but is 'embedded' in a series of citations suggesting the kind of compilation problem that she complained about in interview.

By contrast, the play offers a very different take on these concepts. No longer are they presented as assertions of 'fact' but rather as lived experiences, interpreted through the eyes of both the experiencers and the observers. A play, as already pointed out, demands a different set of resources in its realisation (both as script and as performance) and as such affords a different kind of meaning. The next section will explore how reconfiguring the essay as a play allowed Anya to move from a strongly assertive representation of the information to a more analytical and tentative approach.

6.8 ... to Negotiations

The next extract (Extract 6.11) represents, in part, the content presented in the essay extract, though it is important to stress that the themes and issues expressed in the essay extract also appear at other stages throughout the play as a consequence of the ongoing involvement of the character participants. In other words, although this extract deals most specifically with the issues from the essay, the themes are revisited as part of the ongoing discussions between the characters who comprise the band of travellers.

Extract 6.11

[There is a young woman on the other end [*of the park bench*], bent double by the weight of her house. He can feel her looking at him out of the corner of her eye. Boris starts to feel self-conscious about the diminutive size of his shell. To mask his unease, he clumsily attempts to engage in conversation.]

Boris (to the young woman) : That's a big place you've got there! You must be proud to have so much! - (in petto) : Durrrr! Why do I always have to come up with such crap?!

Young woman : So much ? I don't have anything, mate. They took it all...

Boris : Who took it? Who took what?...

Young woman : Oh god! I don't know how many times I've told this story...Here we go : I got burgled a few days ago. The b*****s took everything, everything went out the window...So here I am, minus everything about me, minus 'all the books and all the records of my lifetime'. My home is just a.. shell...er, sorry, I mean, no offence of course...

Boris : Yeah...okay...I mean, I'm sorry about what happened...Umm, what's your name?

Young woman : I'm Holly, and you?

Boris : My name's Boris...tell me some more about your shell...

Holly : Well, yeah...my home's a shell...it's been, like, gutted... Actually, I'm a shell, I feel like my insides have been scraped out. I had everything just the way I wanted it, you know. I felt so safe, so at home. I hate this expression, yeah, cos it denotes such an egocentric conception of the universe, but anyway, for want of a better one : it was soooo ME. D'you know what I mean? And now that's gone...and -I don't mean to sound melodramatic- but my identity went with it... They messed the house up so badly...I'm such a mess. I've lost my centre, you know...I'm like, lost...I don't really know where to go, so I sit in the park with the winos and, er...snails...It's such an invasion!...All my notions of public : private have got mixed up...Imagine if this happened to you, Boris...if someone ripped off your shell and stamped on it...

[...] **Boris** : What's all this about being lost, though...? Centres, and all that?... your, err...notions...?

Holly : Well, you know, to be at home is to know where you are; it means to inhabit a secure centre and to be oriented in space . If you take the home away - your reference point - you feel lost, you know, and exposed, nude...you put so much of yourself into your home, people build homes out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality.

Boris : Oh yeah...I think I've heard about that before...but what about those notions...?

Holly : You really do need everything to be explained to you, don't you?...Ok, my home was my canvas, yeah...my arena for self-expression...but everyone knows that we're culturally determined, so, like, I'm under no illusions, yeah, my way of organising my space and its

components pretty much cohered with everyone else's on this Island, and differed from people's ways in other cultures, or from other backgrounds, or other age-groups...get the picture?...I mean, we classify things in terms of public : private, clean : dirty, and on and on...and that's all adhered to...represented through people's domestic environments...you know...

Boris : Err...Yeah...But Holly...all this about losing your identity, ...I mean, I've just met you and I don't think you're empty, or lacking in personality...you're alright, man...You still seem to be able to be yourself...maybe you don't need that house as much as you think you do...

Holly : Yeah, well I'm adjusting, man. reappraising, you know...

As is evident from the extract, the encounter between the two characters in this scene provides the opportunity to express the essay content as an enacted dialogue. The flow of the interactions generates the opportunities to articulate the relevant information according to the overall context of the communicative event itself. The experiences and needs of the participants lead them to respond to each other in the particular ways they do, and because, as a result of the affordances of the genre, they have experiences and needs peculiar to themselves, the dialogue flows in a particular way. The writer of the play, Anya, creates her characters with the experiences and needs that are necessary to produce the content of the original essay (as was the task requirement). And it is precisely because she is creating 'human' characters with lived experiences that the reflexivity that is evident in the play but absent in the essay is allowed to emerge. The implications of 'house', 'identity', 'possessions' 'security' are now no longer generalised abstractions but instead have become particularised experiences.

Holly's exposition of the essay content is contextualised within the lived experience of having the 'security' of the home removed from her through the off stage event of a burglary. The spokenness and the 'personalisedness' mean that other resources such as anger and regret make the information experienced instead of reported. The information expressed in the essay content is turned on its head, expressed as *loss of* rather than *existence of* those features that the anthropological definitions of the home express.

Extract 6.12

The 'immobile' home stands for a desire to fix a centre, it is a will to grasp orientation, order and identity. Thus, the dwelling can be interpreted as an elaborate metaphor for the concept of human identities.

Extract 6.13

Holly : [...] it was soooo ME. D'you know what I mean? And now that's gone...and -I don't mean to sound melodramatic- but my identity went with it... They messed the house up so badly...I'm such a mess. I've lost my centre, you know...I'm like, lost...I don't really know where to go, [...] Imagine if this happened to you, Boris...if someone ripped off your shell and stamped on it...

What's more, the loss theme becomes, in fact, the theme of the quest; that is the thematic orientation shifts from a focus in the essay on what the domestic space and other 'built environments' *are* in anthropological discourses to what they *mean* and how these meanings are experienced, in the play.

Because these characters – these snails and young women whatever – were saying them, it connected it to the reality of what they were talking about

because they were constantly subjectifying and talking about their lives and which doesn't happen with [essays] – you know they [the characters] make generalisations but not in the same way that an academic or anthropological text would

Other modes, as indicated in Table 6.1 also contribute to the meanings expressed in the play. In Extract 6.11 above, Holly is the embodiment of the discussion of 'home' expressed in the essay by a series of accumulative assertions. However, whereas in the essay this was presented as an assertion of unproblematic 'fact', here the character is a personification not only of those assertions but also as a problematisation of those assertions ('There is a young woman on the other end, bent double by the weight of her house').

In this instance, Holly's 'home' is characterised as a huge weight on her shoulders, a theme which is entirely absent from the essay itself. This is further emphasised by the self-conscious reaction of Boris when he contrasts the 'size' of her 'home' to his own tiny shell (Boris starts to feel self-conscious about the diminutive size of his shell.). The physicality of the play encourages these kinds of dimensions just because there is a need for these alternative resources. Anya herself remarked on how the play carried her towards dealing critically with issues that were not dealt with in the essay.

well what happened in the play didn't come from that [the reading she did for the essay] – and there was no plan in the play to have that particular theme but um I think it just started from the scene with the burglary [Anya's house had recently been burgled] and Holly and Michael's predicament – but it all came together that all these people had issues connected with things that they had lost

Each of the three companions who joins Boris in his quest stand as metaphors not only for the experienced reality of themes set out in the essay but for the problematisation that is lacking in the original. They are described as people literally carrying their houses on their backs who gradually, through the process of the narrative, discard their burdensome possessions until, finally, they are free of the weight of their 'homes'.

So as a result of 'writing a play' Anya found herself paying attention to an issue which plays a crucial role in the narrative focus of the play which, following the 'quest' tradition leads the protagonist and his companions towards an understanding about the real value or otherwise of the home, possessions and their relationship to identity.

Perhaps the most significant implication with regard to how Anya relates differently to the information and how the information itself is transformed in the essay concerns the shift from asserted facts to negotiated understandings. Unlike the essay where information is developed largely with sequences of propositional assertions organised into identified themed phases with paragraphs and sentences, in the play it is expressed as conversation. The assertiveness of the essay which, as I said, presents the information as unchallenged and unchallengeable is here open to be contested. For example:

Extract 6.14

<p>Boris : Err...Yeah...But Holly...all this about losing your identity, ...I mean, I've just met you and I don't think you're empty, or lacking in personality...you're alright, man...You still seem to be able to be</p>
--

yourself...maybe you don't need that house as much as you think you do...

Because the play has different characters, each with their own discursive identity, there is a greater freedom to be able to articulate personal opinions. The immediacy of speech with its demand for instant feedback ensures that the information itself becomes transformed into something else, it means differently because it is expressed differently.

Furthermore, because the dramatic production insisted on personalised outcomes rather than the generalised descriptions that typify the essay, Anya was enabled to explore those anthropological issues that she so ambitiously listed in the introduction (identity, status etc.) in a way that, according to the lecturer quoted above, was 'incredible for a first year student'. Of course, this then raises the question of whether the essay as a genre, with its own characteristic affordances, limits what students can write and how far they can both develop and display their knowledge.

... I can do it [digress] in essays, but generally you feel much more limited and that it has to be expressed in a particular way which is coherent with the rest of the essay, and basically I have fewer liberties...

There is much more that could be said about this extract relating to the wide range of different kinds of resource used in its making (e.g. the appeals to shared knowledge which is obviously not shared by the alien snail - *everyone knows...*, the exasperations with having to explain everything – *you really do need to have everything explained...*, the irony of Boris's comment regarding shells – *I think I've heard about that before* and so on. These aspects relate not

to the essay or disciplinary preoccupations but to the experience of 'being a student' that I will discuss in the next chapter.

What is important to say here, however, is that although the play allows certain things to happen, just as in the essay, they are constrained by the creation of the characters themselves. Certainly the play allows the writer to introduce dimensions to the discussion which are a reflexive response to the topics rather than a reporting response. However, with different characters and different events etc, (a different plot) perhaps a very different focus would have emerged.

In the next section I will look at the effect of reconfiguring the references and quotations cited in the essay as characters in their regenred productions. This discussion will further illustrate some of the points I have made above but will also provide additional perspectives on the transformative effect of regenring.

6.9 The 'Living' References

As the result of my stricture to the students involved in this study to incorporate the references they had used in their essays some of them chose to achieve this through introducing those writers as characters 'speaking for themselves'. Sometimes the students reproduced the quotes from their readings in their original form, speaking, as it were, the written words.

... and then because I wanted to add an extra dimension I allowed the scholars themselves to quote in their own words - um- just to make the whole thing come a little more to life. (Dan)

In Dan's⁸ case, these referenced authors were introduced as holograms conjured up by a futuristic computer which was acting as a kind of library for a student engaged in research. In Anya's case, they were introduced as plotline characters speaking their words within the frame of a conversation which took place in a café. The 'normality' of the social setting allows for the information, the citations, to be incorporated into a direct discussion as opposed to the reported nature of their incorporation in the essay.

Extract 6.15

[Unbeknown to Boris and his three key informants, the group at the adjacent table (three men and a woman) have been listening in on their conversation. One of the men leans towards them, addressing the whole group. Boris notices they are all wearing badges with 'A.A'⁹ marked on them.]

Man : Hello there! Please forgive me, but I couldn't help overhearing you talking about Tailand, and Tai identity - I do hope you meant it without 'h' – it's more correct...You see, this is my area of expertise, I've done lots of fieldwork there over the years...Yes!... I'm Andrew, by the way, let me introduce you to my friends : this is Constance, and these two fellows are Mike and Colin..

[Boris, Holly, Michael and Sudipta all introduce themselves, exchange handshakes, and join the tables.]

⁸ I discuss examples from his work in the next chapter

⁹ In the play 'AA' stands for 'Anthropologists Anonymous'

Andrew : Yes...You see, I introduced and edited a book very recently, and the very title, *Civility and Savagery*, refers to the way in which the Tai classify their environment... There are two main binary oppositions : those of the 'tai : kha', and 'müang : pa'. And you see, by qualifying themselves as 'tai', the people of Tailand appropriate 'freedom-loving' values, and by contrast, they attribute a servile character to the non-tai : the 'ka'. Furthermore, 'müang', in which the Tai has historically asserted his identity, denotes the 'political domain' and social development, as opposed to 'pa', which is from the same root as the latin 'silva' - the forest - which denotes notions of the wilderness and *savagery* : the hill-people...¹⁰

Boris : Right,... so they like think that all the goodies live in towns and the wild ones lurk in the forest?...

Sudipta : Ha! Jungles!

Mike : Exactly...the forest as a place of danger, or more positively as a place of refuge or purgation, was conceptually opposed to the security and order of the town and city...¹¹

Holly : Was?...

Colin : Yes, things have shifted somewhat, today we invest the forest with attributes of retreat and tranquillity, in opposition to the social evils and stress of the city...¹²

In this extract, Anya presents a multilayered representation of the information that was expressed in the original essay. The contextualisation

¹⁰ Turton, Andrew (ed) 2000 'Introduction' in *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*, Richmond, Surrey : Curzon Press

¹¹ Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin, 1999 : 4 *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, London, Routledge and Keegan Ltd

¹² Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin, 1999 : 4 *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, London, Routledge and Keegan Ltd

of the citations and the dynamic nature of conversation, as discussed in the last section, lends a different set of meanings to the information compared with the essayist representation.

Extract 6.16

Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards write that 'the forest as a place of danger, or more positively as a place of refuge or purgation, was conceptually opposed to the security and order of the town and city. Yet today we invest the forest with attributes of retreat and tranquillity, in opposition to the social evils and stress of the city' (1999 : 4).

The words of the cited authors are more or less the same but in the play they are integrated into an actual discussion, responding to articulated comments and questions. Because this is a spoken discussion there is a need to provide the kind of feedback that ensures conversational flow. The feedback itself needs to do something to facilitate the flow and that 'something' means something in its own right. In the case of this extract, they provide a synthesis of the information but one which is firmly located in the 'lived' world of the companions as opposed to the 'intellectualised' world of the discipline. In others words, the interjections of the questing companions *mediate* the information provided by the cited authors and makes it palatable for the 'ordinary' 'person in the street' as represented by the companions.

It is also interesting to compare the two extracts in considering the effect of the speech like elements that Anya adds to the quoted pieces. In the essay the Pearson and Richards quote follows on directly from the Andrew Turton quote (see extract... above). Unlike in that extract where Anya provided an explicit, synthesising comment as a linking device, in this case she offers no

explanation of how the two quotations relate to each other. Instead, the reader is left to infer relevance from the actual (physical) juxtapositioning of the quotes. Anya realised that she had tended to do this after revisiting the essay in preparation for our interview attributing it to laziness.

I think sometimes out of laziness because I haven't left myself enough time or I just can't be bothered to think about how I can rephrase this I'll just quote and then add another quote by somebody else – and – you know it's difficult to read. (Anya)

The impact of such unmediated juxtapositioning is that the reader may or may not know how the writer means the information to be read. The lack of reflexivity that explicit mediation offers reinforces the sense that the essay is a compilation rather than a discussion that the students referred to in interview.

The sequencing of the conversational gambits in the play, however, offers specific 'readings' of the information through the understandings and interpretations of the core characters – the companions. The reinterpretation of 'Andrew's' research based information and the ensuing interchanges highlight the discursive quality of these views. 'Mike' picks up the two preceding comments with a strong confirmation of Boris's reinterpretation ('Exactly') which serves not only as a cohesive spoken device but also to validate the way in which Boris has understood. It reflects the kind of approval that students writers desire, but which, when they are in the process of writing, are sometimes unsure of getting. Mike is, after all, an expert, and his approval must be worth having.

A different kind of interaction links the next two utterances. Holly's interrogation of the use of the past tense makes the transition between the two opposing realities – the forest as a fearful place vs. the forest as a tranquil place – natural. The question requires a confirmation (or otherwise) and some kind of explanation so that the second half of the quote becomes linked not only to its other half but to Andrew's quote too. In other words, the information is now presented as a real dialogue between real people. They are a group of people (experts and lay) engaged in making the information. With different questions different answers might be given. If Holly had not noticed the use of past tense, perhaps Colin would not have mentioned the shift. Of course, before getting too carried away by thinking of this as a real world conversation, it is important to remember that what I am talking about is a constructed product. A 'secondary genre', as Bakhtin might define it, in which Anya has contrived to bring about these 'conversations' in the pursuance of the task assigned to her – the exercise in regenerating.

This 'personifying of cited references was also visible in other students' regenerated productions. Assif, for instance, redesigned his original economics essay as a radio phone-in featuring John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman as guests arguing for their respective economic theories. In this production, not only were the guests enabled to 'speak for themselves' in typical radio style debate but their presentations of theory were mediated by the radio host and the questions asked by the members of the public who phoned in with their questions. This allowed for the essay content to be developed and clarified within a context where these issues had a 'real world' currency rather than the more abstract account that the essay produced.

Extract 6.17

...

If in a recession and investment doesn't respond through flexible interest rates, Classical theory states that prices and wages will also adjust to return the economy to full employment output.

With a reduction in AD, prices fall (supply chasing fewer buyers). Purchasing power of money increases and AD returns to original level with full employment.

Extract 6.18 (PC = host, MN = member of public, MF = Milton Freedman)

PC: Well, I hope that answered your question, Mr. Bashir. Our second caller is a Mr. Mike Need from Birmingham.

Mr. Need, your question please.

MN: (Heavy Birmingham accent) Thanks. You just talked about flexible interest rates being able to get us out of a recession. My question to MF is, if in a recession and investments and savings do not respond through flexible interest rates, then what?

MF: I'm glad that you asked that question. If flexible interest rates do not stimulate the economy, then the flexibility of prices and wages would allow the economy to return to full employment. Listen. With a reduction in Aggregate Demand, prices would fall. This fall in prices means that our money that we hold has greater purchasing power. Since items are cheaper we can buy more. This would lead to greater spending, Aggregate Demand returns to its original level and the economy has full employment again.

The affordances of the question-response exchange that occurs helps to unpack the ideas presented in the essay. Furthermore, the spokenness of the dialogue leads to a shift from the heavily nominalised writtenness of the original version with a corresponding shift in agency. The 'looser' spoken version of the phone-in reflects what Halliday (1989, p.93) refers to as 'grammatical metaphor' where the speech versus writing is expressed through different grammatical choices. (e.g. 'Purchasing power of money increases.' vs. "This fall in prices means that our money that we hold has greater purchasing power.").

In fact, the essay did not actually refer to Freedman as such, but rather 'classical economics' as a theoretical field. The attachment of the theory to a real person is a necessary consequence of the genre which required an expert representative of the theory to oppose the 'real' Keynes in the debate style structure of the programme. Having constructed a 'real' person, that person had also to have a point to prove which led to the inclusion of "I'm glad you asked that question" or "listen", which further add a sense of agency – that these ideas really belong to the speaker who needs to demonstrate his authority.

There are, of course, other aspects of Assif's production that bear further consideration. For instance, what is the impact of knowing that the caller had a strong Birmingham accent? Unfortunately, the time gap between producing the work and my present analysis is too long for me to expect Assif to remember exactly what was in his mind. However, we can speculate that he had some reason to draw specifically on this as a resource in the production of the dialogic interaction here. Perhaps additional 'authenticity' in the representation of radio phone-ins. Maybe there is some connection to Birmingham and business etc.

Other students also incorporated experts as live participants in their work. Andy, who produced his work as a newspaper report, included quotes and references to 'living' political theorists including Aristotle and Montesquieu alongside the modern day commentators that he had been reading in full journalistic discourse. And Dan, as already mentioned, introduced holographic versions of the experts referenced in his original essay. This probably resulted from my request that they retain their academic references within their new productions but the manner in which they chose to do so was entirely their design. This vitalisation of the academic community as a lived and living thing will be picked up in the next chapter.

6.10 Conclusion

The productions I have discussed in this chapter demonstrate how the process of transduction reconfigured the original essay content. The affordances of the new genres gave new (alternative) opportunities to the students in the presentation of the information contained in the essays and in so doing 'forced' a transformation on how they produced and what they produced. The siting of the essay content in familiar everyday contexts (parks, cafes, radio programmes etc.) allowed the students to transform the ideas as real experienced events which had real experienced meanings. Whereas in the essays the ideas were expressed as abstract thought, in the new productions those same ideas became lived experiences with consequences that had actual effects enacted through the interactions between the participants and the things that happened to them. This was most prominent in Anya's regenerated production as a result of the narrative

design of her work where the theorised concepts of the 'domestic space', for instance, acquired a kind of urgency in the lived world that she created. Both versions are, of course, 'secondary genres' in the Bakhtinian sense, but whereas in the essay, the 'every day' utterances are disguised as a result of their 'writtenness' as abstract thoughts, in the new genres they are *played out* as interactions through the availability of a different range of semiotic resources. These resources offer different opportunities to express and evaluate the information in ways that allow the student writers to position themselves as 'knowers' in their own right.

In the next chapter I will move on to discuss how the regenring allowed the students to focus on aspects of academic work that tend to remain invisible in the conventional essayist genre. The discussion will refer specifically to what I want to call the visiblising of practice through the reflexivity that the regenring offered the writers.

Chapter Seven – Recontextualising the Narrative: doing the work or 'Being a real Indian' (Gee, 1996 p. 129)

You know when I started writing it [...] and I just felt like writing and I started on this play [...] but I didn't have any clear plan to critique or to represent fieldwork or anything – so it was all quite subconscious I think.

Anya

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how the regenring process led to a reconfiguration of the information presented in the original essays as a result of the affordances of the new genres. In this chapter I want to consider how this process also necessitated a recontextualisation of the essay information and through that recontextualisation how it allowed the students to bring a different kind of reflexivity to their work than had been possible in the essays.

At this moment I should point out that I am not using the term *recontextualising* here in quite the same way Bernstein (2000) uses it and as I have used it in earlier chapters; that is as *pedagogised* discourse. Here I use it to mean recontextualisation in a more general sense – shifting the information from one set of circumstances into a different set of circumstances with all the implications that such a shift entails, rather than a shift from one discourse (e.g. professional) to another (e.g. pedagogic) as in Bernstein's discussion. Of course, I could also argue that Bernstein himself

was talking about regenring when he talks about recontextualising knowledge. The process, for instance, of producing pedagogised knowledge inevitably involves a shift in genre as I have conceived it in this discussion. Perhaps, to avoid confusion, I could have invented a term such as *re-circumstancing*, but it is not a very attractive term and it seems unnecessary so long as my present use is clear.

There are two 'themes' that I want to develop here. The first relates to reflections on 'doing' the discipline where I want particularly to focus on how regenring allowed for a different kind of commentary on the disciplinary concerns through the new sets of resources were available. The second relates to reflections on the student experience (being a student) and how these writers were enabled to foreground this experience. Neither of these themes are (normally) available to student essay writers or, for that matter, professional academics¹, with, perhaps, the exception of ethnographic accounts.

7.2 Writing as Reflection

All writing is reflexive. It is the inevitable consequence of the mode itself. As Ong (1982/2002) has reminded us, writing is a technology² involving the

¹ There has been a substantial amount of discussion, particularly in the context of scientific writing, which highlights the problem of being unable to write what really happened in publications. Scientists such as Peter Medawar (e.g. *Is the Scientific Paper a Fraud*, 1964/1996) and Richard Feynman (e.g., Nobel speech, 1966, cited in Tobin, 1999) have expressed their frustrations. Sociologists such as Gilbert & Mulkay (1983/2001) have undertaken fascinating detailed analytical research into the differences between what 'they' *write* happened and what 'they' *say* happened. Bourdieu (2004) himself revisited the whole issue of how scientists do science and how sociologists of science write about science.

² In fact, according to Houston (1988), in Europe the teaching of writing as opposed to reading was not widespread due to the high cost of writing equipment.

use of tools in its expression. He goes on to suggest that 'writing heightens consciousness' (p.81), precisely because it involves transformation from what he considers the naturalness of speech into the artificiality of writing. Kress (2003) goes further than this in his discussions of transduction and transformation (see previous chapter) particularly in considering the different semiotic affordances of different modes. In this chapter, however, I am less concerned with the semiotic potentials of writing, and in this case regenerating, than I am with the potentials writing has in ensuring reflexivity. This, I suggest, is because there is a disconnection between thought and the activity involved in writing. It is the combination of this gap which has a delaying effect and the affordances of the mode itself, as discussed in Chapter Six, that brings about automatic reflexivity. In addition, the process of writing involves also a process of reading as the writer checks back over her work to gauge, for instance, where she is or what she's said, and the combination of these two activities leads to a process of continual appraisal and reappraisal of the thoughts as written down. The affordances of digital writing further facilitate these interactions between what the writer has written and her evaluations of what she has written. This is a discussion that merits further investigation but not in this thesis.

7.2.1 Essay Writing

The kinds of reflexivity that an essay affords are those that result from selecting from a 'relevant body of knowledge', as was articulated in the departmental guide to essay writing presented in Chapter Two, and organising these selections into a particular kind of narrative sequence, which, as Andrews (2003) suggests, derives more from Greek rhetoric than the informal and highly personalised 'essaies' of Montaigne, for instance. Indeed it is likely that Montaigne would have failed dismally had he been

writing under the assessment conditions that exist for university students. The reflexivity of the conventional student essay is a 'rationalist' type of reflection. Gee, for instance, (1996) argues that essayist literacy is

... founded on the idea [...] of people transcending their social and cultural differences to communicate 'logically', 'rationally' and 'dispassionately' to each other as 'strangers' [...] in a thoroughly explicit and decontextualised way. (p.156)

Although his representation of logical and dispassionate communication typifies the (apparent) norm associated with essayist literacy, I disagree with the notion that it is 'decontextualised'. I would suggest that the student essay in particular concerns the recontextualising of information 'gleaned' or 'culled' or 'researched' from other sources such as lectures, books and articles. In other words, the student essay genre invites a kind of 'read' experience. In an essay, events are reified and participants are turned into thoughts and ideas. Wood (1999) argues that essays are designed to reflect a 'truth oriented knowledge' based on 'monastic' conceptions of knowledge which is 'text based and serves to validate and to fortify belief' of existing thoughts and ideas. He argues that this genre 'appears to emphasise the self-justifying and rhetorical aspects of writing, rather than their auto-didactic and reflective capabilities in the context of other practices' (p.1) He contrasts this to what he calls 'crafts-guilds result oriented knowledge' which is 'task based knowledge that facilitates situated actions and judgements' (p.2) However despite his concern that essayist literacy may not be the best way to encourage reflections on practice and experience, he acknowledges, as does Andrews (ibid), that the essay provides a familiar and, what has come to be considered in the context of assessment, a rigorous genre in which students manipulate their course learning.

We should also admit that it has provided a well-established structure, and therefore formal criteria, by which the academy can apply rigorous academic evaluation. The idea of rigour is a helpful benchmark for discussing consensus within the bureaucracy of assessment but we tend to use it carelessly to discuss symptomatic gestures rather than embodied attitudes. (Wood, 1999:3)

The student essay is a self referencing activity which exists, as already discussed in earlier chapters, only in the context of formal school and university learning. Its affordances are limited to manipulation of information within whatever frame has been established by the question asked. The qualities that make it successful, or otherwise, rely on the student's ability to make the 'right' choices according to the precepts laid down by the original question itself. The kind of reflexivity it affords is one of reflection on knowledge as 'thing', characterised by the phrase *body* of knowledge, rather than as a process characterised by actions and experiences and 'embodied attitudes'. The organisation structure of an essay, with its discursive phases (introduction – body – conclusion), leads to a particular kind of narrative which forces the writer to make particular informational choices. Furthermore, in order to be 'rigorous' that information must justify itself through evidence and explicitness of purpose. The essay offers a closed context in which a student writer can reflect on the meanings ('truth' or otherwise) of certain (relevant) selections from the 'body of knowledge'. The combination of these resources somehow fixes the communication so that the reader can only position her own understandings (meanings) of the original in juxtaposition to those produced by the essay writer rather than participate in the kind of collaborative meaning making that takes place in other modes of communication.

7.2.2 Regenring

By contrast, the new genres chosen by my students forced a different recontextualisation of the 'read' information which in turn led them to draw on different thematic resources, as mentioned in the previous chapter. This, I suggest, resulted in them 'saying' or being able to 'say' different kinds of things to the things they 'said' in the original essays. In other words, the new genres oriented the writers towards different thematic material as illustrated in Table 7.1 which refers to Anya's two productions.

<i>The Material</i>		
Thematic Orientation	Essay	Play
e.g. General characteristics of 'macro genre'	Discussion, descriptions, evaluations Essay management (introduction, 'body', conclusion i.e. sequence of information/ideas)	Activity, events, interactions between characters Narrative & stage management (sequence of events)
e.g. Specific characteristics of 'micro genre'	disciplinary features - e.g. preoccupations 'Problem' - 'resolution'	'questing' features - e.g. journey, companions, task Task - solution
e.g. Specific characteristics of the work in hand	Anthropology of the built environment themes (<i>descriptions</i> of fieldwork, domestic space, etc.)	The context of the careers advisor and the task set (fieldwork <i>activity</i> , ethnographic <i>work</i> , etc.)

Table 7.1

Anya's comment, with which this chapter begins, makes this point well. Very little explicit discussion about methodology, let alone evaluation of that

methodology, appears in the original essay, as we shall see later in this chapter. By contrast, in the regenerated production, it forms a major theme. The subconsciousness that she refers to is, I would argue, the result of the affordance of the genre which offered her the chance to examine the essayist information through an entirely different lens. In other words, the process of recontextualising the essay information led her to make a different set of organisational and hence informational choices. This evokes Bazerman's (1988) suggestion that 'writing is choice making' (p.13) to which I would add that these choices are further determined by the narrative context in which they emerge. The genre of, in Anya's case, a play – which is further specialised into a type of play – a quest – entails a certain type of narrative development with certain types of characters who do certain types of things.

Anya found herself writing about things that she hadn't 'meant' to because that is how that kind of narrative worked. It took her along pathways of discussion that were, of course, already in her thoughts as they form a fundamental part of her studies, but were either absent or, at the very most, heavily disguised in her original essay. The world that she constructed was one in which she was able to experience, through informed imagination, the activity of fieldwork methodology, of ethnographic research. It allowed her to explore, albeit in imagination, the practices involved in 'being a field researcher' or 'being a disciplinary professional' based on, as she put it, '*what I understood of what an anthropologist might do in the field*'.

Of course, before I move on, it is necessary (and prudent) to acknowledge that the regenerating was also a revisiting the information that these students had already worked with:

I mean all the information was there already in one sense (Andy)

This in itself is a key factor in shifting their own position from novice to expert as discussed in Chapter Five, but it was more than having the information there it was also having to do something different with it.

Yeah it was different just different. Not just having the information but trying to juggle with it so that it would fit into whatever I mean I didn't have a clear kind of plan as you do with an essay. I mean I did as I went along, had the plan – well how can I bring this in? (Anya)

This 'juggling' served to refocus their conceptualisations of the things they had produced in the essays. Dan, whose new version took the form of a kind of Socratic dialogue, makes this point below, associating new understandings with the modal shifts that his own regenerated work entailed.

To be able to put it in that format [a spoken 'dialogue'] to re-express those ideas in a form of interaction between two and sometimes three characters certainly gave more vitality to the whole theme and it clarified a lot of the issues for me also. And to reword some of the ideas, to go over those some of the things I'd written first of all, and to modify them, edit them and express them in a new way which refined more particularly the way in which I wanted to express those ideas – that was a big help. And only the format of dialogue and character allowed that to happen. (Dan)

Writing differently led these students to think differently about the ideas and information represented in their original work. Jordan (2001) discusses the impact of writing differently in connection with her own foreign language

students. She is referring to their 'year abroad' projects which she wanted them to write as ethnographies instead of the more familiar essayist genre.

Suddenly everything to do with writing must be thought through afresh, and there is a new level on which they are being asked to make strange, to un-learn what they thought they already knew, to question what they had assumed to be unquestionable. (Jordan 2001:44)

I want to argue that a similar kind of process occurred with my own students, despite the fact that what they were writing were not 'ethnographies' based on actual experience. What they were doing, instead, was constructing imagined realities – replications if you like – which also allowed them to develop the kind of 'critical' reflexivity that Jordan attributes to her students.

7.3 'Lived' Experience vs. 'Read' Experience

'Meaning does not come [...] from the contemplation of things or analysis of occurrences, but in practical and active acquaintance with relevant situations.' Malinowski (1923:325)

In this section I want to consider how the regenring process enabled students to develop a more 'active acquaintance' with their discipline through their imagined enactments of the discipline at work. More importantly, I want to illustrate ways in which 'active acquaintance', albeit imagined, allowed them

to develop the kind of reflexivity that emerges as the result of engaging in practice at first hand, of having expertise in the doing of the research itself rather than reporting other people's research; what I want to call 'read' experience. Read et al. (2001) point out that essay writing is 'a daunting task for the student who has to argue from a position of authority that he/she does not actually possess.' (p.389) referring to Bartholomae's (1985) observation that students are required to mimic the style of the professional academic. Authority comes partly from having experience of the things that you are writing about³. Through reconstructing the kinds of experience that 'professional academics' have or might have, some of the students in my study were able to offer the kinds of reflections on practice that normally only results from primary engagement. The reflections on practice and theory that were communicated in these dramatic productions acquired an authenticity that was missing from their essays.

Through these new genres the underlying preoccupations of the disciplines, which in the essays were presented as objectified abstraction, became realised as preoccupations and concerns that arise out of practice. The problems associated with how we get information and how we negotiate ideas which were only available in the essays as the actions and experiences of absent others – the professionals – became realised as the actions and experiences of 'people' who were present, including the students themselves. In the reproductions, the students had the opportunity to shift from second, or even third hand, reporting to first hand experience. Assif's radio phone-in *performs* interactions between opposing theorists, rather than reporting their 'written' ideas. Anya's play *enacts* the doing of fieldwork and describes the

³ Although of course I don't want to ignore issues of power and social and cultural capital (e.g. Bourdieu) that typify institutional relationships.

field researcher's experiences as *own* and *lived* experience rather than *other* and *read* experience.

7.4 'Doing' the Discipline: visiblising practice

The physicist Feynman's complaint mentioned in Chapter Four, "*There isn't any place to publish, in a dignified manner, what you actually did in order to do the work.*" (Feynman, 1966) Nobel Lecture, cited in Tobin, 1999) is not so much a frustration with the scientific paper genre as expressed by Medawar (1964) who suggested that they were in a way 'a fraud' because they present a fictionalised narrative of events, but a desire for the chance for there to be a formally 'validated' context in which the 'real work' can be told. Ethnographic writing attempts to solve this problem, but as has been fully discussed (e.g. Geertz, 1985 or Clifford, 1992) elsewhere, it presents its own set of problems in the production of knowledge, a theme which Anya's reproduction explores to great effect.

The two examples, one from Anya and the other from Assif, that I consider below will, I hope, demonstrate ways in which the regenring exercise allowed students to show what really happens in the process of doing the work.

7.4.1 Anya

The first example is from Anya's work and illustrates the differences in how disciplinary practice is represented between the two versions. The original essay describes fieldwork as a problematic methodology through adopting

the concerns of nameless but presumably qualified others whereas the new production enacts the methodology. In fact, in contrast to the original essay, which makes only cursory reference to fieldwork as practice, the play foregrounds it as a continuing theme throughout. The enactment which the play requires allows Anya to offer reflections on the problems surrounding fieldwork as a methodology as represented by the problems that her protagonist experiences when undertaking fieldwork.

I will first illustrate how the essay deals with this issue and then give an example of how the play represents it. Extract 7.1 below is the first paragraph of the essay.

Extract 7.1

Fieldwork methodology has undergone vehement inside and outside criticism over the past decades, and as a discipline, anthropology has been compelled to question and reappraise its approach. Consequently, there is an intensified concern amongst social scientists to submit rigorous, comprehensive research, by unfolding the many layers surrounding a specific aspect of culture.

As the opening paragraph, this extract serves to establish the discursive tone for the rest of the essay. It is an appropriate opening given the institutional context of her course although there is no specific reference to this theme in the assignment question itself. By recognising this key disciplinary preoccupation, Anya indicates that she has engaged with the subject and has taken on board important underlying considerations. It was awarded an approving tick in the margin and may well have contributed to her receiving the positive comment that her essay was successful in 'combin[ing]

ethnography and the theory excellently' from her official⁴ reader. This opening is certainly a clear indicator that the writer is adopting the 'insider' concerns of anthropology. She is 'being an expert' despite her actual (student) status as novice.

However, despite this strongly assertive opening, the rest of the essay is an almost entirely unproblematised presentation of the work of several ethnographers working in this particular field of anthropology. A question that comes to mind is, why is this so? The answer is, perhaps simple. To have taken this theme and developed it through her overall discussion would have required the knowledge and experience that could only be derived from being a practitioner in the disciplinary field instead of 'being a student' which is, after all what Anya was (*being a first year undergraduate and having a question like that*). The challenges that she expresses here concern the integrity of the very works she refers to throughout the essay. The opening invites the reader to take a critical view to what is about to be discussed, although as we progress through her discussion, it is easy to forget that this frame has been established. In fact, the issue of ethnographic methodology as problematic is not returned to until the very last sentence where Anya appears to realise that she needs to complete the problematising frame that she initially established.

Extract 7.2

[...]

Thus, it seems that anthropology has much to contribute to a better understanding of society in general, but it must further strive to develop better means of applying this knowledge.

⁴ By this I mean the tutor who was responsible for assessing and grading the essay as produced for the anthropology unit.

The strongly articulated 'thus'⁵ serves as a reminder that the main discussion was intended as an evaluation even though an explicit critical perspective is absent. Because the first year student does not have the actual experience that is required to tackle 'a question like that', she is required to rely on rhetorical elements to indicate critique rather than practical experience. There is little more she can do in the context of the essay since the affordances of critical academic writing demand a greater degree of disciplinary expertise. Perhaps this is what Anya meant when she talked about 'shadow writing' the writing as though expert that I have already discussed earlier.

The seemingly added on final comment stands somewhat outside the 'normal' practice of the student essay, moving, as it does, into a different communicative function. Expressed as a piece of advice, it is somehow misplaced. Student essays are not (usually) the place for giving explicit advice ⁶, although it is possible, as discussed in Chapter Five, that the influence of pedagogical genres might explain this. Agency here is certainly strongly represented – that is agency as someone who 'has the right' to 'advise' professional field workers. However, perhaps it was simply the quickest means with which Anya could finish off; an attempt to balance the positive (anthropology has much to contribute) with the negative (vehement criticism) anticipated by the opening paragraph. Perhaps, after all, it is the real Anya commenting herself on what she thinks should happen with anthropology.

In interview Anya said that she was '*only referring to it* [fieldwork methodology] *en passant* – *it wasn't really part of the essay*' though, as I have

⁵ See Chapter 6 for fuller discussion on the use of 'thus'

⁶ though any reading of Montaigne's 'essais' would contradict this point.

already indicated it demonstrates a recognition that this is a debate that has been raging in the discipline for years.

This framing of the essay, mentioned only 'en passant' becomes, in the play, a key theme that runs throughout the production. It could be argued that Anya was enabled to tackle it more explicitly the second time round precisely because it was the second time round. However, although that point is likely to be true, of more relevance to this discussion is that the process of transduction was at play forcing a transformation on the position that she was able to take through constructing an enactment of experience (with all its necessary resources) as opposed to a report on other people's thoughts which typified the essay. Because she had set up her narrative as a quest which involved *doing* fieldwork she was then *required* to reflect on the practice itself ('...*he* [Boris] *is doing fieldwork* ... ') The things being discussed in the essay become 'real world' experienced work with all their inherent problems. The challenges presented in the wording of the question itself become first hand 'realised' challenges rather than the idealised second hand challenges typical of essay writing.

Throughout the play there are numerous examples of reflection on fieldwork methodology. For instance, the device of the protagonist being from another planet allows Anya to represent the notion of 'otherness' or 'othering' as is the current term, from two perspectives. The alien is 'the other' from the perspective of the encountered informants and they in turn are 'the other' from the perspective of the protagonist, Boris. In this way she is able to represent the anthropologist's dilemma around the problem of

cultural subjectivity - the 'gaze' of the ethnographer.⁷ Furthermore, she constructs an 'insider' joke regarding the physiology of this alien field researcher by creating him as a snail from a planet with is populated by snails. This trope is itself a manifestation of a quote in the original essay ('Like some strange race of gastropods, people build homes out of their own essence.' Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Boris serves as both the embodiment of the essay topic (the built environment) and the practitioner engaged in research on the topic. The alienness of Boris allows Anya to develop her arguments about fieldwork around experiences familiar to herself in settings that she knows all too well. She is, after all, a human from Earth and not a snail from another planet.

Extract 7.3 provides a good example of the way in which the resource choices and their manifestation work in the narrative. The immediate narrative context is that Boris has started out on his research and meets Holly who has recently been burgled and is sitting in the park despondent. They have been talking for a while about what happened to Holly when she notices that Boris has started taking notes.

Extract 7.3

Holly: [...] Hey!! Why are you taking notes, man?! You weirdo-park-prowling-freak-boy!

Boris: Err...well, I've got to do a study on *humans* and the built environment, for the A.A...so I need to take *fieldnotes*.

Holly: Oh yeah?...

⁷ See e.g. J. Clifford (1992, 1995) on anthropological methodology – specifically fieldwork and ethnographic writing. Anya would certainly have been exposed to his ideas during the course of her studies.

Boris: Yeah...and what you've been telling me seems pretty relevant...but I've got to try and be *objective*, so, you know, about my shell...don't like ask me to *subjectify*, ok?...But I can, err, *empathise*!

Holly: oh cheers...

The device allows for a double reflection on ethnographic methodology, that of the researcher and that of the informant. The 'vehement inside and outside criticism' that Anya obliquely refers to in the essay becomes, in the play, realised through the interactions of these two characters in the constructed context of a real person being 'used' as 'subject' (or informant) for a 'real' piece of ethnographic study. Until this point, Holly had considered herself to be having a genuine conversation about her predicament and that Boris had been genuinely concerned. The enacted shock of realisation that she is now the subject of research, along with the embarrassment that Boris displays in having to explain himself, is a manifestation of the problem of fieldwork methodology' and the response Boris gives, with Anya's italicising of the problematic terms, 'humans', 'fieldnotes', 'objective', 'subjectify' and 'empathise', play out the awkwardness that an ethnographer might experience having been 'caught out'. The italics removes these words from the norm and places them in some kind of parenthetical space where they attract a different kind of reading – a disciplinary one which doesn't really belong to the 'real world' chatting of two 'ordinary' people. This separating out offers an ironic reflection also on the student using these words self consciously – an example of the 'being a student' that I will look at further below.

What is important here, though, is the way in which the meaning of 'vehement criticism' expressed in the essay is transformed into the experience of both being criticised (Boris by Holly) and being the 'victim' of the methodology itself (Holly by Boris). This is not reported criticism, but 'real world' criticism through 'real world' experience of the act. The play articulates the critique through the acting out of the problematic in contrast to the essay which merely identifies it.

Moreover, Holly's role in the play is not only that of 'subject' but also that of expert articulating the theorisation of the domestic space as her 'real life' experience. This dramatic turn allows for the more positive view of ethnography, stated in the final comment of the essay. This character is, as indeed are all the central characters, both the subject of the research and the expert on the topic - the 'informant' (and the term itself is indicative of the fieldwork methodology debate) who has the information that the researcher is seeking. It is her description of what happened to her that contains the theory. She not only represents herself as the 'subject' of study but also as the representative of the theory about identity and the home. Her experience is an incarnation of the theorised.

The problematic is expressed as 'happening' and not as 'thing'. Moreover, because it is a 'happening' that is imaginable, the evaluation of fieldwork methodology appears more authentic than the objectified 'vehement inside and outside criticism' of the essay. We can imagine how we'd feel if we were Holly and we can imagine how we'd feel if we were Boris and perhaps more importantly, we can recognise the writer's own agency or hand in the work through the familiarity of the dramatic exchange as opposed to the 'borrowedness' of the essayist phrase.

7.4.2 Assif

In the next example, which comes from Assif's work outlined in Chapter Four and briefly discussed in the last chapter, I want to illustrate the activity of disagreement which is typically represented in essays with an 'argument – counter argument' organisational structure. This conventional organisational mode is constructed by the writer who, through specific organisational and grammatical or lexical choices provides a essayist logic to the construction of an argument. In Assif's essay, the argument – counter argument organisation revolves around two opposing economic theories: classical and Keynesian. I have already explained that in the regenred production, Assif 'brought the theories to life' by creating 'living' proponents of those theories (Keynes himself and Milton Freedman).

The point I particularly wish to illustrate here concerns the sorts of things that actually happen around disagreement between theorising, the interactions around arguing in person (face to face) as opposed to arguing in solitude (in front of the computer). Assif's original essay starts 'cold' with no discursive framing in contrast to Anya's above. Instead he moves straight into descriptive account first of 'classical' theory (in relation to interest rates) followed by an account of Keynesian theory which he sets in contrast to the parameters already established in the first part of the essay. The overall effect is one of logical and measured written discussion realised through the overall sequential organisation (argument (classical) followed by counter argument (Keynesian))⁸ and juxtapositionings of the theoretical stances with contrast indicated through verbal expressions of difference and evaluation. Extract Five exemplifies this.

⁸ Authorial evaluation might be represented through the placing of Keynesian theory in the counter position though it could also be sequenced this way for historical reasons – Keynes was responding to classical theory in real historical time.

Extract 7.4

Keynes's view of investment also differed from the classical view. The classical theory suggests that investment is also primarily a function of the interest rate. Keynes didn't accept this. First, Keynes suggested that during a recession or depression the interest rate may already be so low that it cannot go any lower. Interest rates are not flexible during economic downturns. Consequently, you don't get the needed stimulus to I and AD that a drop in the real interest rate might give you. Second, Keynes believed that even if the interest rate was able to decline significantly, investment would not be responsive. For example, during a recession or depression when demand has fallen, firms would not invest in new production equipment when its existing equipment was under utilized.

Disagreement here is presented strongly (Keynes didn't accept this) but dispassionately with reference to concepts in general (e.g. recession or depression). However, in the regenerated production the 'real work' of disagreement is vitalised through the imagined characterisation of Keynes, on the one hand, and Freedman, on the other. Because the new genre enacts the disagreement, third person ideas are recontextualised as first person dialogue. The new genre affords Assif the opportunity to convey the partisan nature of theory making, the cut and thrust of argument between people rather than the apparently objective representations that essay writing promotes. The extract offers us a different take on scholarly discourse; one which reflects the 'everyday utterance' of human communication.

Extract 7.5

(Show goes off-air. PC (host), MF, JMK remove their headphones. Adverts play on-air.)

So, what do you think of the show so far?

JMK: I must admit, I was nervous at first, but it all happened so quickly. The talk went through just like that.

MF: So, JMK, you're still stuck up with your views about 'r', heh? What was it that you said, 'more acceptable view?' What was all that about???

JMK: You know very well. Your allegiance to Classical economics, that school's as good as dead. After you couldn't explain the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, I would have thought that you would have given up that sinking ship by now!

MF: What, and your Keynesian theories could explain the Great Depression?

PC: Listen, this isn't the time or the place for this.

(PC points at clock, then headphones)

(All put on headphones)

Because he chose a radio phone-in as the genre in which to relocate the essayist information, he was able to provide this momentary glimpse within the overall frame of the genre. Radio phone-ins, if they are on commercial radio stations, have advertisement breaks during which something hidden from the public happens. The revelation of 'what happens' allows Assif to offer a reflection on the practice of doing academic work rather than the results of the academic work as is the case in the essay.

This interlude in the radio programme provides a 'fly on the wall' view of these two theorists, the hidden world of academic debate, to which novices

(first year students) and outsiders are rarely privy. Just as in the case of Anya above with her representations of disciplinary preoccupation, Assif reconfigures theoretical positioning as experienced interaction – doing disagreement. This reconfiguration allows Assif to normalise the ideas through turning these 'gurus' of economic thought into ordinary people who argue just like anybody else. The disagreement is no longer objectified as it is in the essay but is, instead, subjectified through first person speech. The kind of disagreement here is made with speech with all its own affordances of tone of voice attitude represented visually in the text with multiple question marks , exclamation marks or inverted commas. We can almost visualise the raised eyebrows. Furthermore, the general '*during a recession or depression*' in the essay becomes the specific '*the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s*' - a much more evocative and emotive example because it is real and hence imaginable. Those involved in disagreement seek hard evidence because it is more immediate in the fast movement of spoken communication. Writing, by contrast, moves at a very different pace where there is 'time' to develop the meanings contained in abstraction.

Both examples illustrate ways in which the new genres allowed for a reflection of disciplinary practices that was not available to the students in their original essays. The chance to remove the practices and ideas from the abstractions of academia and relocate them in imagined real world contexts allowed these students to normalise them in the way that usually only first hand practical experience affords.

7.5 Being a Student: asserting identity

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the opportunity to foreground the experience of being a student is rarely available for students in any formal context apart from conversations with each other in the bar or muttered grumblings to academic literacy specialists with whom they have nothing to lose, particularly in connection with 'assessment' capital (after Bourdieu 1991 etc.) Arguably the introduction of the 'learning journal' has attempted to 'give' students the chance to discuss their own experience, but as Crème (2005) has pointed out, these are problematic particularly where assessment is concerned as the issue of writing purpose becomes confused. As a genre a journal is supposed to be a private space, but as soon as it enters the public domain it loses its generic framing. Of course, student essays can express 'studentness', but this tends to be reflected in a kind of deficit way as the lecturer comment cited in Chapter Five implied, *I think we land up reading our student's work expecting there to be problems with it*. However, what I mean here is that the essay does not afford the possibility to talk about what it is like to be a student doing this kind of work. This is not to say that essays *should* afford students the opportunity to discuss their experience of doing the work. Essays have quite a different purpose as already discussed.

So what I want to discuss now is how this aspect – being a student – emerged in the new productions, either directly, as in the case of Anya and Dan, and indirectly in the case of Saskia.

For instance, Dan, whose regenred work involved a dramatised account of a student of the future involved in a kind of library (talking computer) research for the assignment topic, realised that the narrative device he had designed meant that his new production was essentially framed, not by the

question of the original essay itself, but by the experience of being the student gathering the information in response to the original question. It was about what you *do* when you read and undertake library research, your thinking and your responses to the information rather than the information itself, although of course that too was expressed.

It was almost, not a paradox, but one of those things where it is representative of the situation in which I wrote the first essay – there was me the student, you know, taking information from these resources – these books – formulating my own ideas and perceptions of them [...] and then taking that position, which I was inside in the first instance, and then applying it to another situation in which I became the outsider – but almost telling the story or how I received that knowledge and formulated my own ideas. And so Joshua was me in a sense and he was reacting in the way I would have reacted [...] so it was a kind of reflection – a futuristic reflective response to my own situation of writing the first essay. (Dan)

Anya's was also about the process of gathering the information rather than about the information itself. However, she decided to comment on the difficulties of the student experience. Her version of the 'getting' the information relates more to doing the discipline, as discussed above, than to being a student. Her play allowed her to interweave the double reflection of being a student and being expected to be an expert.

'Well I think I did want to communicate through Boris the awkwardness of being a first year undergraduate and having a question like that [...] and, I guess, what I understood of what an anthropologist might do in the field – and mixing that with someone just not having a clue what he's doing. And

you know Boris is me in that sense – but not particularly in the detail of the character – but in his position.' (Anya)

Each of these three writers offered a different take on the experience but in their own ways offered insights into what could be seen as their own sense of empowerment or otherwise. Each of the regendered productions foregrounds the process of 'getting' information but each develops the idea very differently highlighting different aspects of the student experience. Each reflects very different experiences of 'being a student' perhaps resulting from writers' own actual experiences and attitudes to the situation.⁹ Dan's protagonist is very much in the apprentice mould, engaged in learning through Socratic dialogue. His 'Socrates' was a computer which meant that the power relationship that Andrews (2003) mentions, where 'the dice are weighted toward Socrates' (p.122), is less marked and an idealised equal relationship is presented. His 'student' is in no way fazed by the requirement to undertake the essay task as is suggested in the prelude to the dialogue.

Extract 7.6

Joshua is young and restless, but duty beckons. His education, in the formal mould, has entered its concluding phase...

By contrast, Anya's 'student' is uncertain and inexperienced.

Extract 7.7

⁹ This can only be speculative, but my own personal knowledge of the students and their circumstances allows me to make such speculations.

[Context : Boris, a 19 year-old male snail, has just left school. Undecided about which direction to slither in next, he makes a two o'clock appointment with Mr. Austin Tatus at his local I.C.C.C Bureau (Inter-Species Cryptic Careers Counselling)].

While Saskia's , represented as the children of a well meaning but somewhat overly didactic parent, are somewhat disengaged from the educative process as such.

Extract 7.8

The children are [...] 'little adults' tucked up in bed, who watch their parent with awe, wonder and often bemusement. It should not be completely clear as to whether they are mentally absorbing what is being said or are simply enjoying the rise and fall of their parent's voice...

With these characterisations, each of the three student writers managed to establish a conceptual framing to their narratives which ensured particular kinds of readings related to 'being a student'.

Unlike the previous discussions of the work, I do not provide paired extracts for this aspect of my analysis. This is, as has already been discussed, because essays do not afford this kind of reflection and because the informational content is not my focus here¹⁰.

7.5.1 Saskia

I will start off with an extract from Saskia's work which concerns, as explained in Chapter Five, a discussion on Swahili as an example of an

¹⁰ even though, as in the case of Dan's work, the information presented in the extract provided is, in fact, represented in the original essay.

African lingua franca. As I have already indicated, hers does not have an explicit design feature which includes the 'student' as participant. Hers concerns the relaying of information to what might be considered unready 'recipients'. Nevertheless, her work certainly conveys a sense of what it is like to go through the experience of the kind of formal learning that typifies the university.

Throughout this production, the children seek both to guide and to subvert the parent's 'lecture' through humorous comments and attempts to shift the discussion away from what *he* wants to talk about to what *they* want to talk about. There is a gradual shift from initial enthusiasm on the part of the children articulated through their interactions with each other and the parent as their questions and remarks direct the flow and to some extent the content of information.

Extract 7.9

Parent:

OK anyway today I thought I could tell you the story about how Swahili came to be such an important language in East Africa. People always talk about English as a world language but they rarely consider that there exists many other important non-European languages all over the world. People need to learn one of these important languages so they can talk to people who have different first languages to themselves.

Child 1:

Umm... Why would they be speaking to people with a different language?

Parent:

That's a good question [...]

People often refer to the people in different social groups as different tribes, but it is best not to use this word as it has negative associations.

Child 1:

So it's a bad word like 'SHIT' or 'FUCK'!

Child 2:

Ha ha! YOU LITTLE TRIBE! I HAD A TRIBE OF A DAY! TRIBE YOU!

Parent:

Yes, ok now! I think you both know it is not a swear word!

However, this initial enthusiasm soon dissipates as the parent's contributions become longer and longer, adopting more of a lecture mode than a discussion mode.

Extract 7.10

Parent [after a lengthy phase of telling about, (or more appropriately lecturing on the topic of Swahili)]

... Sorry, I can see you are getting bored now – but I just want to tell you one more thing! It was only late in the eighteen hundreds that Swahili became a written language. Africa is not like England, Here we write about everything we think is important, whereas in Africa people pass on information by telling each other stories. Story telling is important, it is only Western influence which brought about the idea of recording information in writing.

Child 2

If you lived in Africa people would put sellotape over your mouth or everyone would always be asleep!

This brief exchange, coming as it does towards the end of the production provides comment on the experience of being at the receiving end of information, having to listen to the relentless drone of the imparter. The child's remark articulates the experience in an immediate and humorous

manner. This kind of comment would, of course, be difficult in the formal, public and power conditioned arena of the lecture, verbally articulated, though it is sometimes visually performed in the real world context through the drooping or glazed over eyes that can sometimes meet the lecturer's gaze!¹¹

7.5.2 Dan

While Saskia's 'students' are not 'students' in the sense that they are being expected to fulfil a task, both Dan's and Anya's 'students' are explicitly engaged in student work. In both cases the protagonist is acting in response to the requirement to do an assignment; the essay itself. It is quite interesting (and amusingly telling) that in neither of the productions does the 'student' actually end up *writing* the essay. The narratives concern the getting of information rather than the writing of it. As Dan says, already quoted in full above, he was telling the story of how he received that knowledge and formulated his own ideas. However, unlike Anya's production, Dan's does not reflect on experience as experienced but almost entirely on experience as process. In fact, what he produces is an idealisation of the experience, one that he would, perhaps, prefer to the one he actually had. In this production he is enabled to articulate his own responses and questions, through the enacted dialogue, to the information that he is confronted with. Nevertheless, the production offers glimpses of student attitudes as the next extract will show.

¹¹ Speculatively, the disengagement that the children in Saskia's production display might also be a reflection on Saskia's own personal disengagement with her subject. She dropped out shortly after producing this but, I am happy to say, re-enrolled on a different course at the same institution the following academic year. I am not suggesting, however, that the regenerating process led her to these decisions although you never know! She did say that it had been the only course unit that she had enjoyed!!

His original essay question concerns an important approach to the study of religions: 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of a 'phenomenological' approach to the study of religions?' ¹² In the dialogue, 'J.' stands for Joshua the name allocated to the 'student' and 'V.' is for Viddy, the talking computer. The computer is retrieving information and references from its database and giving out the information in response to Joshua's questions. It is worth pointing out that the computer, as will be seen from the extract below, is not without personality or reflexivity.

Extract 7.11

V: ... Of the religious phenomena to be understood, 'it moves within the framework of the given context of meaning ... (blah blah) ... and neither in the sphere of empirical nor within that of ultimate realities'. That's on page 408.

J: That's a little "heady" for me. What are the practical applications? I want "ether to earth".

V: OK, just wait. There's a section on 'Perspectives of a phenomenological study of religion'. Here we go: Pettazoni; 1954; pages 639-642. He pleads for a closer relationship between phenomenology and history of religion, as two forms of a singular science.

J: Sounds sensible.

V: He asserts that a deeper understanding and meaning of events can only be asked from phenomenology. It separates out the different structures from the multiplicity of religious phenomena. Such structures prompt 'meaning', independent of time, space and cultural environment.

¹² See Chapter Four for a more detailed description of the two productions.

J: You mean the arrival at a universality, which necessarily escapes a history of religion?

V: But his insight is that 'religious phenomena do not cease to be realities historically conditioned merely because they are grouped under this or that structure'. The risks of phenomenological judgement may only be escaped by applying constantly to history. Phenomenology "hangs" on history: its own conclusions privy to revision in view of historical research.

J: So a kind of fake autonomy?

This extract is typical of Dan's production in that it visiblises the 'student's' thinking as he processes the information being imparted. The too-ing and fro-ing of the dialogue – articulated 'out loud', allows us to see, and recognise, the kinds of practices that students and indeed professionals engage in when reading. It visiblises the hidden 'voice' of the reader almost as a running commentary or perhaps as the notes that we might make in the margin of a text.

There is also a reflection on the process of reading scholarly texts articulated by the 'blah blah' in Viddy's speech. It offers a kind of reflection on the impatience that scholarly texts can sometimes evoke, particularly when reading for an assignment. The 'blah blah' suggests the experience of skimming for what is relevant to the job in hand and a kind of impatience with what might be considered unnecessary detail. The private skimming that academic reading often entails and which differs from the reading of novels, for instance, is visibilised.

There is, of course, another dimension to what this dialogue achieves and that concerns the way in which Dan reflects his own engagement with the

literature – or rather his re-engagement with it. As he said it clarified and refined the issues for him, partly because it was a revisiting of the ideas and partly because it was reconfigured (see Chapter Six) as dialogue (*And only the format of dialogue and character allowed that to happen*). The kind of visibled reflections (That's a bit "heady", 'Sounds sensible') suggest a more 'sophisticated'¹³ engagement with the literature than is often the case with first year students at the beginning of their courses where 'textbook' information can tend to be taken as matter of fact (see e.g. Mitchell, 1998 regarding the transition from school to university study)¹⁴ The enacted dialogue articulates the kind of 'critical engagement with the literature' that universities educators, for instance those cited in Chapter Two, claim to want from their students. Through Dan's representation of the process of 'getting' disciplinary information we can see (or hear) him pondering over the issues – trying to make sense of them. We can 'hear' him engaged in the process of integrating the new knowledge with his own existing knowledge frames.

What is also interesting about this extract is that once we move from the 'ether to earth', the practical applications, the student, Joshua, engages in a very different way. There is a shift from the rejecting attitude of 'it's too heady' to a different kind interaction with the information. Perhaps this can be seen as a shift in agency from unempowered (lost in the ether) to empowered (in the world of experience). Now instead of standing off from the information he remakes it through reformulation ('You mean...?', 'So a kind of...?'). The articulation of his thinking, visibled the process of making sense of the ideas.

¹³ The word is problematic as it implies that other forms of learning are, perhaps, crude. What I mean here is engagement which demonstrates real involvement with the ideas and information.

¹⁴ Similar approaches to reading are common among international students – even at Masters level – having experienced educational practices which present 'textbook' information to be learned rather than interacted with.

This kind of reformulation is, of course, typical also of essay writing. In the last chapter I showed how Anya did this type of reformulation in her original essay – the reformulation of quotes as part of the process of organising the information. However what is different here is that the new genre allows Dan to reconfigure the original monologic essay into the dynamic of a dialogue. This allows for the 'student' to get instant feedback on his understanding from his 'guide' the 'computer companion', as he puts it in his prelude. What's more, because the dialogic partner is a computer, there is a sense in which his corroboration is authoritative. This is further enhanced through the evocation of holographic representations of some of the key theorists who 'speak' for themselves. Basically, what we have here is a recontextualisation of the essay writing experience. The isolated task of writing an essay becomes a social activity of exchange of ideas.

7.5.3. Anya

But of all the productions, it is Anya's that provides the most explicitly realised reflection on 'being a student' precisely because that was one of her intentions in developing it in the way she did (*'Well I think I did want to communicate through Boris the awkwardness of being a first year undergraduate and having a question like that'*) Throughout her play, but most particularly in the earlier phases, this 'awkwardness' is realised through the activity of the protagonist. As I have already pointed out right from the beginning we are introduced to Boris as someone who is uncertain about what he wants to do. This theme is then developed into an articulation of what it means to be an outsider. This is doubly reflected in this production, as already mentioned,

with Boris the alien snail – the ethnographer of the 'other' – that is 'humans, and Boris as novice (outsider) student.

The following extract articulates the experience of being a disciplinary outsider.

Extract 7.12

Boris : Well, Sir...I liked the bit about me having brains in my head and err...feet in my shoes...but I'm a bit confused by all those akra...akro-whatsits...

Austin Tautius : Acronyms? Ah! The world's full of them, boy! A nifty way of keeping things exclusive, but you'll soon get the hang of it! Deconstruction is the key! It'll open many a door lining your anthropological path...That is all you need to remember!

Although the extract refers specifically to acronyms, what it also articulates is the sense of exclusion that 'being a student' can entail. It reflects also the sense of expectation that the student will, in time, become a professional as the apprenticeship approach implies – 'you'll soon 'get the hang of it ... It'll open many a door lining your anthropological path...' Anya actually commented in interview on this idea of the need to know as only relevant in the context of 'becoming a professional', reflecting her own doubts about that as a reality.¹⁵

*there're these hundreds of articles on the reading list and you if you're ever going to remember their names afterwards – you know **unless you're going to become the anthropologist - maybe** [my emphasis]*

¹⁵ In fact she has gone onto postgraduate study in the discipline!

The next extract further emphasises the student condition, particularly in relation to the enormity of the task in hand.

Extract 7.13

SCENE THREE

[Three days later, Boris is sitting on the steps outside the S.O.A.S building. He has just collected his assignment : HOW MIGHT AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT LEAD TO BETTER UNDERSTANDINGS OF ISSUES SUCH AS SOCIAL STATUS, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND NATIONALISM?

Bewildered, he scratches his head, as that is the only thing he can recall Mr. Austin Tatus telling him about *anthropological considerations*...When the chosen scratch-patch is quite sore, not knowing what to do with himself - or his project- he decides to take himself off on a little exploration of the city.

This description of experience (bewilderment) further expressed through activity (he scratches his head) serves to reinforce the sense of the enormity of the task expected of the student '*having a question like that*'.

Having established her protagonist as 'undecided' and 'bewildered' she is then able to develop this theme through the play's narrative. Anya comments on this when we discuss the exchange between Boris and Holly illustrated above and its representation of a shift into the disciplinary community through adoption of its discourse.

Extract 7.14

Boris: Yeah...and what you've been telling me seems pretty relevant...but I've got to try and be *objective*, so, you know, about my shell...don't like ask me to *subjectify*, ok?...But I can, err, *empathise*!

She explains what she was trying to convey here:

I suppose he's beginning to find his feet – whereas any anthropologist going into fieldwork would have a structure – and here it comes together a bit for him.

In fact, as in all good 'quests', by the end, Boris has shifted from being a novice – bewildered and confused to being, if not exactly a professional, at least someone who has become more self confident, more decisive and ultimately free as represented through the metaphor of leaving his shell behind.

Extract 7.15

Holly : You mean that you're ready to *detach* yourself from your shell? ...Wow! You're sure, yeah? Not a *spur of the moment* thing? I don't want to be blamed for...

Boris : Course it's *spur of the moment*, Holly!! Well, I mean...I *have* been thinking about on and off since we met ...

Boris, having reached 'enlightenment' of a sort having gone through all the experiences of 'doing the research' is now ready to write the essay. As with Dan above the final outcome is positive. But in Anya's production the unravelling of the experience of being a student doing the work involves a

personal and emotional transformation which is brought about exactly through the experience itself.

7.6 Conclusion

What I hope I have managed to say in this chapter is that the process of recontextualising the original essay information the students led the students to provide a more personal reflection both on the information itself and also on the processes involved in getting that information. My argument is that it is the new genres afforded those opportunities because of the resource demands that they made on the writers. If you have characters they must do something and they must experience something express those actions and experiences through different communicative modes – speech, gesture, facial expression and so on. Once these communicative modes are used then not only does it transform the information itself, as I discussed in the last chapter, but it also makes it necessary to communicate things that the essay does not afford. If those things were included in an essay, it would no longer be an essay. The essay affords a different kind of reflexivity, the kind that Bazerman or Wood write about where previous actions are transformed into thoughts. This is no less a reflexive process than the enacted productions that have been discussed here it is just a different kind of reflexivity.

The enactments of experience that are afforded by a play or a radio phone in visiblise the processes and experience that are not the province of essay genres, least of all the student essay. To be 'allowed' to be subjective is a

matter of power and the essay as a genre is to some extent designed to exclude experiences of the kind discussed here. This is not to say that that is a 'bad' thing. The requirement for students to write essays is intended to induct them into 'scholarly' ways of communicating in the way the Gee suggested above. Subjectivity of the type described in this chapter fulfils a very different purpose but one which, arguably affords a different kind of learning and a different reflection on the nature of what is learned.

In the final chapter I will consider the implications of my research from two main perspectives each of which reflects the parallel strands that have permeated the discussion. On the one hand I will discuss what this work might contribute to genre studies, particularly with regard to my focus on the affordances of genres. On the other hand I will explain the relevance of this work in the learning and teaching contexts of higher education.

Chapter Eight - Conclusions and Implications

8.1 Introduction

Having now reached the final chapter after so much effort expended on deciding which stories to tell and which to leave for elsewhere, I still have to decide how to wrap up the discussion. The problem of beginning, as Grass pointed out in 'Dog Years' is one of selection. The problem of ending is the same and requires more distance than is available to me as the writer of the whole. However, I shall pick out those themes which I feel are most useful and relevant as I draw together the different strands of this work.

I suppose if I am to really say what this is all about, it is about transformation. It is about the different transformations that occur as the result of shifting information from one genre to a different genre and the consequences that such a shift entails. It is about the knock on effects of genre shift with regard to the materials available in the production of texts and the impacts that this has on both the productions, and how they can mean, and the producers, and who they can be and what they can say. Of course, it is misleading to separate production from producer in this way, but such a distinction allows for the different foci on social transformation (the participants and their identities) as discussed mainly in Chapters Five and Seven, and semiotic transformation (the materials and their meaning potential.) as discussed mainly in Chapter Six.

However, because my discussion has emerged out of my own context of learning and teaching (at university) this thesis has also been about transformation in relation to student (and teacher) understanding. It is about transformation of students as writers and lecturers as readers. It is about transforming the ways in which we might think about academic writing.

It is also about a personal transformation in that this work has led me to (re)consider the ways in which students are expected, and expect, to engage with their learning with particular reference to the student essay as a genre. I have not specifically sought to challenge the conventions of essay writing but rather to explore what other genres afford and through examining the effects of these other genres the affordances of the student essay have become more visible. As I have previously mentioned, the work that my students produced gave me a unique opportunity to investigate the effect of genre on the shaping of student knowledge and student identity in the context of university study. It allowed for a revelation of what kinds of meanings one genre allowed for compared with another. Without the regenerating process it would not have been possible to observe and analyse the differences, so the opportunity I had with my group of students opened up the possibility to take a look at how genre choice can affect meaning and social positioning.

So what are the implications of this work? Is there a place for this kind of activity in higher education and if so how would it be received by both students and lecturers alike (see e.g. Crème 2005)? Would it retain the freshness of the work and experience in this study or would it instead become yet another genre in the academic production canon?

In an attempt to respond to these questions and others I will review the themes that I have covered in this discussion. Firstly, I will reflect on the

context in which I located my work and the way in which that has shaped the direction I have taken. Secondly I will review the analytical perspective that I adopted in attempting to explore the work in hand which led me to review my own understandings of the concepts of genre and mode. And finally I will reflect on what this study suggests about the means of production within university settings. How do the kinds of activities that students are engaged in through their university studies shape the way in which they learn? How far does what is considered valid within the academic and disciplinary environment extend or limit ways of knowing? What do the kinds of tasks we ask students to engage in allow them to do and who do they let them be?

8.2 Revisiting the Context

The fact that this study evolved out of my normal everyday practice – my work as a teacher in a university – means that it has absorbed a wide range of issues associated with that lived experience. In many ways, this has been a major difficulty in controlling the topics that I have considered here, so perhaps it is worth reminding myself and my readers why I embarked on this particular path. As I have already pointed out in Chapter One, I wanted to do something with the work that the group of students represented by this study. I felt that what they had produced was too exciting and potentially too important to simply archive away. I wanted to share my own excitement with a wider audience. But perhaps more importantly, I realised that if I were to be able to say anything useful about the work, I needed to develop some kind of framework for exploring both the material and the experiential differences between the first essays and the new productions. It

became clear from talking to the students concerned that the experience of producing the new work had differed from the original experience of writing the essay. This was attributed to a variety of reasons ranging from the kind of creative opportunities it offered them to the fact that they were revisiting already researched topics. However, of greater interest was how the regenring allowed the students to transform the information represented in the essay into something quite different. The difficulty was to find out what that *something different* was and, by default, what the *something* in the original was. This translated, for me, into the idea of the affordances of genre building on the concepts emerging from research into multimodal discourses.

Because of the context that I had set up whereby the students could rewrite an essay in a different genre I found myself in the fortunate position of having two versions of the (apparently) same discussion based on the same 'body of information'. In other words, I had something to compare. This opportunity is not dissimilar to the kinds of comparisons that have been made when considering 'representations' of the 'same' information across different modes such as diagrammatic/image representations used in science education versus the written verbal articulation (Kress, 2003) or physical manifestations of verbal and visual texts as in building construction (Karlsson, 2004). However, in my examples the students drew on the single mode of writing for each production rather than oppositional modes such as building construction versus written instruction as in Karlsson (ibid). The surface difference in my study concerned the genre, but the more important difference was what the different genres made happen; in other words the different opportunities that the different genres gave to the students. This was, I realised, the thing to explore; the impact that genre has on meaning. What I hadn't fully recognised, however, was how the regenring process

afforded not only a shift in how the information meant, but also in the way in which the writers themselves related differently to the information; in other words there was a strong shift in agency between the two versions of work.

This last raised questions regarding the ways in which students and lecturers are positioned within the university, a consideration which was greatly enhanced by a change in my own circumstances. I myself shifted, literally from one institution to another. But more fundamentally, I shifted from one identity to another. Instead of being in the position, at least in the minds of the students, as kind of neutral participant, a kind of academic 'confidante' seen as offering a 'safe haven', as one group of students put it, where the high stakes environment of summative assessment plays little part, I became a 'subject' lecturer who had the 'power' to pass or fail students. I was no longer in the position of 'helping' students negotiate the work that others (subject teachers) had required them to do, but I was now the one requiring. I had crossed over, or so it seemed, and that crossing over allowed me to reflect on the sometimes conflicting expectations and desires of both students and academic staff alike as discussed in Chapter Two.

8.3 Reviewing The Analytical Framework

As I have already said, the need for a way of talking about my data led me to develop a framework in which I could describe what it was that seemed to be happening. From the outset, I had realised that the regenerating entailed far

more than a 'rewriting' of the original work. What I needed to work out was what it was that had changed.

One of the most valuable conceptualisations in my analysis, that of the *semiotic resource*, derives from the work in social semiotics of Halliday (e.g. 1979), Hodge and Kress (1988). In fact, it was from the work of Kress and Hodge (1979) that I first came across a linguistic theorisation that helped explain what I came to understand as the notion of *meaning potential* in relation to choice of semiotic resources¹. Their discussions on 'what the language is doing, and how a linguistic analysis bears on an understanding of social and psychological processes' (p.14) made an enduring impression on my approach to language and my subsequent interests in the kinds of social, cultural and linguistic interactions that I have discussed here.

Having adopted this position the question then arose as to whether a genre should also be considered as semiotic resource and if so, what kind of resource. In this regard, I decided that a genre *could* be considered as a resource in a similar way that modes and media have been used in multimodal discourse analysis. A genre acts as a kind of interface between the utterance and the social context in which a communicative event occurred. They determine the 'shape' of the utterance, as Kress (2003) suggests or as Bahktin (1986, p.78) argues they 'organise our speech'.

The speaker's speech will is manifested primarily in the *choice of a particular speech genre* [sic]. This choice is determined by the specific nature of the given sphere of speech communication, semantic (thematic) considerations, the concrete situation of the speech communication, the

¹ Although in that book (*Language as Ideology*) the term 'semiotic resources' does not appear.

personal composition of its participants and so on. And when the speaker's speech plan with all its individuality and subjectivity is applied and adapted to a chosen genre, it is shaped and developed within a certain generic form. (p. 78)

The utterance, then, is shaped by the chosen genre which itself is already a response to a given social interaction. This ties in closely with Halliday's social semiotics framing which relates the 'text', or utterance, to the 'context of situation'. (1989:26).

This then brought me back to the productions themselves and the transformations that had occurred during the trans-generic shift. I decided to use multimodal conceptualisations for my analysis because I felt these offered the kind of attention that my data required despite the obvious fact that it was all produced as writing. Most 'multimodal' discussions concern 'mixes' of, for instance, 'verbal' and 'visual' modes, although the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) suggest that this is an over simplistic interpretation of the concept of multimodality. Nevertheless, I felt that the nature of my data with the implicit shifts in mode (e.g. writtenness to spokenness) that typified it, warranted this kind of framework. Moreover, the terms of reference (design, production and distribution) developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) were very useful in expressing my understanding of the nature of communication as depicted in Figure 3.1, the Cycle of Communication, discussed in Chapter Three.

However, it is also necessary to re-emphasise the points I made in Chapter Three regarding my use of the category *mode*. In my study, mode is taken to refer to the 'channels' for communicative activity (e.g. speech, writing, gesture, visualised depictions, stage management), the 'mode' of

communication, to use a more commonsense term. To this category, I have added a further one, that of *textual materials*, which refers to the 'grammar', lexis and organisational aspects of the production. This concerns, as Halliday (1989:26) says 'the role assigned to language', for want of a better word, expressing textual (ideational, interpersonal and textual) meanings. This corresponds to the 'modality markers' discussed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, p.159). This terminological distinction (mode as well as textual material) was helpful in exploring the other major theorisation that has underpinned this study, *affordance*, which I will revisit briefly below.

Finally the descriptive categories I used (genre, mode, textual materials, media) allowed me to consider the interactions between the various semiotic resources used in the productions and the knock on effect from one to the next as illustrated by my examples in Chapter Three concerning the communication of statistical data (pp. 94 - 95)

If, as I have argued, genres shape the text or utterance, then what does this imply in terms of the meaning of the text? This brings me to the final theoretical conceptualisation that forms my analysis, that of 'affordance' (Gibson, 1976). This does not specifically concern what a thing looks like (its properties) but what it can be perceived as making possible; in other words, in semiotic terms, its meaning potential. This concept allowed me to think about what the different genres represented by my data allowed to happen. In other words, what were the affordances of the essay and what were the affordances of the new genres chosen by my students? How did they 'shape' and 'develop' the information? And how was this 'shaping' manifested?

This last question led, inevitably, to a consideration of how the new genres made available entirely different sets of mode resources – in fact the new

genres enforced these alternative sets. Having recognised this, the next point for discussion was how these difference manifested themselves in the paired productions. This formed the basis of my three data chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) where I considered how the genre shift brought about a repositioning of authorial (or discursive) identity, a reconfiguring of the information through the process of transduction (Kress, 2003), and, through the process of recontextualising the original work, a new and more personally reflexive understanding of the issues under discussion.

8.4 Implications for Genre Studies

It is inevitably difficult to anticipate whether and how this research will contribute to discussions on genre, but the perspective that I have taken as summarised above provides, perhaps, a slightly different focus when compared to many other genre discussions. As discussed in Chapter Three, genre studies have tended to focus on what genres look like (structural approaches) or what they are used for and how they are used (functional approaches) whereas in my study I have tried to focus on what genres let us do. I have considered genre as a semiotic resource which serves to shape a text and determine what range of other resources are available in the production of that text. In other words, I have considered genre from the perspective of its *affordances*; what it allows to happen (or what it insists on happening) in textual production.

I have also proposed the concept of *orientation* (Chapter Three) in considering how genres shape texts and I have suggested four orientations

as being useful in this kind of analysis; contextual orientation and discursive orientation which concern social framing and thematic orientation and semiotic orientation which concern material framing. These orientations emerged in the process of analysing the data itself (the student productions and the interviews) and although this theorisation is still in its early stages, it offers a new way of talking about genre which warrants further investigation. It might, for instance, be a way of providing insight into how and why genres have emerged as social semiotic resources in communicative practice. One such practice, of course, concerns students writing at university which is the focus of consideration in the next section.

To sum up this section, I want to suggest that the approach to genre, described in this study, might help to avoid some of the difficulties associated with other genre approaches. For instance, a structural approach can tend towards restriction, whereby a text 'belongs' to a genre category only if it 'contains' certain elements while a functional approach can tend towards prescription, where 'appropriateness' can spill over into regulation. This is not to say that specific genres don't fulfil specific communicative or socio-functional goals, but rather that these specific uses may restrict how those goals can be achieved. By contrast, understanding genre as a semiotic resource with meaning potential, like that of other semiotic resources, makes it a more open category concerned with affordances rather than features. Furthermore, the introduction of the idea that genres have particular orientations which not only frame and reflect the social circumstances but also determine the material resources available for use, offers a greater degree of flexibility in considering what genres do.

8.5 Implications for Learning and Teaching

Since working with the data discussed in the thesis and having shifted my own professional position as discussed above, I have begun to place the experimental work I did with the students in this study into the context of my own subject teaching. I wanted to 'put my money where my mouth is'; in other words, I felt it was important to move towards taking forward what I have been writing about here into the normal hurly burly of disciplinary teaching.

For the last two years I have introduced a different kind of writing into one of my modules, Intercultural Perspectives on Academic Writing and Research. This is a postgraduate module which contributes to MA programmes in TESOL and involves students from all over the world and with a very wide range of teaching and learning experience. Instead of asking students to produce a conventional essay on a particular topic, I have asked them to undertake a kind of ethnography on themselves experiencing the new. I discussed ethnographic writing with them and gave them examples to read. I explained that the purpose of this assignment was to give them the chance to 'just write' and not worry about whether it was academic or not. However, as with the regenring work, I wanted the group to work with the literature associated with the module to see whether and where it linked to their own experience. As with the regenring assignment, I had no real idea of where this would take either me or my students.

The first time I introduced this, a year or so ago, I was met with two basic responses from the group of around fifty students. Half the group were delighted with the chance to write differently, to write about their

experiences and their interpretations of those experiences. By contrast the other half were appalled largely because they felt cheated of the 'academic' experience they had expected. The following extract from one of these assignments reflects this view very strongly.

Extract 8.1

I have been wondering why I did not receive the task well other than its seeming ambiguity, and I think that it may have to do with the fact that I felt as if I was being cheated out of what I should get from an MA in the UK.

Her feelings towards the work derived from her own perceptions of what academic writing is and what constitutes academic study.

Extract 8.2

... this one [task] defied any prior structures I have because I am faced with the challenge of writing a seemingly non-academic assignment for an academic purpose.

While not everybody articulated these feelings in this way, at least half the group used the task, as I had hoped, to reflect on experience. Overall the response was very positive, particularly as it gave the students the opportunity to get into writing as writing rather than to get bogged down by concerns about academic conventions and essay structures.

I repeated the task with this year's cohort without experiencing the uproar that occurred first time round. The results were equally exciting, and this time, with my addition of the offer for them to choose their own genre, several of them moved towards working very differently. For example one

wrote her assignment as a letter to me, arguing that this genre allowed her to write more freely. The shift in discursive identity that this genre shift entailed, for instance, clearly allowed this particular student to feel more confident both as a writer and as a producer of knowledge. Writing a letter gave her a frame with which to address me (the reader) more directly and more personally precisely because it positioned her differently as a writer when compared to a conventional essay

The effects of asking these groups to write differently in this way are difficult to quantify and as yet I have not made any serious investigation. The following extract, which appears in the conclusion of the work by the student who I have already cited, illustrates one kind of effect.

Extract 8.3

My earlier misgivings about the assignment and its relevance have been unfounded because the writing of it has proved revealing although quite tasking, both in the effort to remember meaning making events and to properly relate them to the MA. I am not completely sure if the things I have chosen to speak about are right for the purpose of this work and if I have been able to bring them into the discussion properly but I have at least begun to realise how much I have learnt about the things I thought I knew. I have realised from this writing that in writing down some things I am able to relive them again and in reliving them, I am able to put them into proper perspective, to categorize them and interpret them in totally new ways.

Another kind of effect, which the team involved in teaching this programme has noticed, is that in subsequent written work the students as a whole have tended to interact more personally with the material (the disciplinary content) rather than present the material as a display of learning.

I do not intend here to start up a new discussion about this work, but I include it as part of my discussion on the implications of the present study for learning and teaching. It provides an example of the relevance of expanding the student writing repertoire to include other genres and indeed other modes of production as well.

Fellow researchers, such as Parker (2003) or Andrews (2003) have suggested that alternative forms of assessment are desirable not only because this would give students different opportunities to learn but also different ways of being judged on their learning. They argue for a more varied approach to learning and assessment, not because the essay is 'bad' but because it limits students to one kind of knowledge making. Andrews (*ibid*) suggests that different genres,

... can be seen as true alternatives to the default genre, or they can be seen as alternative versions of or routes toward the essay, keeping it alive [...] Refreshing a genre like this, or indeed challenging more vigorously its dominance as the default genre is what keeps the most important qualities alive: clear thinking, exchange of views, reasoned commitment and lively expression. (p126)

Parker (*ibid*) in her response to Barnett et al's 2001 discussion on the HE curriculum, proposes a 'transformational curriculum' where student activity (or 'engagement' as she prefers) is negotiable. She suggests engagements such as 'writing in various voices including pastiche, parody and other genres' alongside the conventional forms of assessment in order to make space for the students to do what they 'actually want to do with this (disciplinary) knowledge' (p.541). This evokes Wood's (1999) discussion where he argues that a more contextualised approach to writing which gives design students

the chance to situate their writing within the design task in hand. This, he argues, will 'encourage a more 'embodied' form of learning' (p.12) that would allow students to make connections between theory and practice more effectively than the conventional essay genre allows.

Another major issue that emerges in much of the literature on student writing concerns the validity and authority of students' own opinions and experiences. This point was also evident from my own discussions with students. They do not feel they have the authority to express the interpretations that they themselves have towards the 'body of knowledge' that they are having to handle. They are too distanced from the disciplinary experiences and ideas to be able to make them their own if indeed this is what they want.

Lea's (1999) discussions with students raises this point when she challenges Laurillard's (1993) suggestion that academic knowledge is a 'second order phenomenon' removed from 'everyday' experience. Lea's informants pointed out that they tended to link the content to their own experience. 'Her reading of the course materials was mediated by understandings that she brought to the reading from her own familiar cultural contexts within which she was reading for and writing for' (1999 p.119). My own work here has also shown how everyday experience can interact with academic knowledge and how this kind of interaction can enhance students' own learning experience.

It is difficult for students, particularly at the beginning of their studies, to participate in the disciplinary discussions, as already pointed out in Chapter Two. To be able to link it to their previous and current experience gives them the chance to explore disciplinary knowledge from a position of power

(they are experts in their own experience) as opposed to a position of powerlessness. This does not mean that they will not notice the difference between academic genres (essays and articles) and other genres (personal narratives, plays and letters). On the contrary, this kind of work highlights the different ways in which genres shape our texts and can help students move towards a more explicit understanding of how academic knowledge, and more pertinently, disciplinary knowledge is made. By asking students to write differently we are also asking them to notice different written genres and hence the resources (modes and textual materials) that different genres use and what these resources can do. Developing genre awareness in this way encourages students to see language rather than to see 'past language' (Carter & Nash, 1990, p.24) and this in turn encourages a more critical relationship to their academic learning and beyond.

I mean, even when I'm reading newspaper articles I focus in much more on what the author's message is about. (Andy)

What my study shows is that given the opportunity, students can work with disciplinary information in many different ways. And that, perhaps more importantly, this kind of work allows them to interact with the information in ways that conventional essay genres do not allow. This could be seen in what they were enabled to say, how they were enabled to say it and who they were as 'sayers'. In other words, the work produced by my students allowed for what Parker (ibid) considers as being what is 'educative about the curriculum'; that is 'simultaneous engagement and interaction between the domains of knowledge, activity and self' (p.542).

This does not, of course, mean that the essay is defunct, but rather that, as Andrews proposes, it should be seen as one among a range of different

genres in the student productive portfolio. What I hope I have demonstrated with this study is that exploring disciplinary information with a range of genres allows students to develop a more open or rather more reflexive approach to their learning because the new genres afforded different ways of meaning and different ways of being. Moreover, and of equal importance, through the analytical perspectives I adopted and developed, I have been able to reveal what these differences are and what they do. This, I hope will contribute not only to our understanding of the kinds of student production that I have discussed here, but also to our understandings of communicative interactions in general.

8.6 Limitations and Potentials

I realise that I have attempted to cover a lot of ground in this study. This is the result of my own substantial experience of working across and with all the things I have talked about and reflects the difficulties of compressing these many years of work into one thesis. Of course, I could have chosen to focus on a much narrower range of issues, perhaps ignoring the socio-political context in which this work occurs or I could have decided to analyse the productions from a less socially situated perspective. However, this proved impossible for me as every time I attempted to stick to one thing, the other things kept on pushing their way through. In the end I decided to show as much of what I found out as possible and to contextualise it in the real lived experience of my students and of myself.

However, this meant that certain areas of analysis were not covered in as much depth as they might have been. For instance, I could have provided a much more comprehensive discussion on the material transformations that I discussed in Chapter Six had I decided to take a less broad approach. For example, I could have chosen the work of only one student or focus on only the reconfiguration aspect of the genre shift. This might have provided a more detailed analysis of the material resources selected following a more linguistically oriented method of writers such as Hunston (2000) or Martin (2000) whose close analyses also explore linguistic resource choices in the descriptions of how we do certain things with texts – in these cases how we express appraisal or evaluation. Conversely, I could have focussed more specifically on institutional experiences prioritising the student experience over their production as in Lillis (2001). I could also have taken a more obviously pedagogic stance as in Burke and Hermerschmidt (2005). However, I preferred to adopt a hybrid approach because I wanted to see how these different foci might come together.

This interweaving of issues (the material, the experiential and the pedagogical) reflects the kinds of interactions that constitute the university learning and teaching communication cycle and in combining them in this way I feel I have been able to explore issues that might otherwise have been overlooked. This is particularly true in relation to the interviews with the students and lecturers who participated in this work. Their commentaries on the different themes that I have investigated provided insights that could only have come from their reflections on the different activities in which they were involved; being students doing those things or being lecturers and doing those other things.

I cannot leave this discussion, without making mention of the work of Rob Pope (1995). His book 'Textual Interventions' explores the impacts of recasting texts both as a pedagogical resource as well as a theoretical approach to textual understanding. Although I have not explored his work to any great extent so far, and despite the rather different perspectives that we take, it seems that there are connections between our work that certainly warrant further consideration.

A major motivating factor in this study, as expressed in Chapter One, was to try to describe what happened in the students' work so as to be able to say something informative about it rather than simply 'this is good' or 'this is interesting'. I wanted to be able to say that the work was interesting because it did this thing or that thing. It was this that led me to consider the concept of affordance and to develop the ideas associated with the orientation (social and material) of textual products such as these. In the end, although there is need for further work to refine the approach, I feel that I have succeeded in identifying some important effects of genre choice, particularly, though not only, in educational settings.

There is also the question of the degree to which this kind of work with students may or may not impact on their understanding and the degree to which the regenred work might be acceptable in the disciplinary community. I was only able to show one of the regenred productions to a subject lecturer for comment but it would have been helpful to get reaction to others too as issues of completeness of ideas or accuracy of representation might emerge. The one lecturer who read the one production gave a very positive response regarding the amount of subject understanding and knowledge revealed in the regenred work, but it might have been a different story with the others. This might form the basis for future research into the affordances of different

genres and the advantages and disadvantages within certain frames of knowledge making.

Certainly, it could be argued that with the alternative genres the students showed the 'original critical thinking and a willingness to take risks' that marks out highly valued student writing, as expressed in the handbook cited earlier in this discussion. The regenerated work also fulfils the expressed desires of the lecturers interviewed in Chapter Two for the excitement of something new (*we're in a state of hunger for excitement in something that's different*). However, writing differently offers big challenges for lecturers, particularly when their disciplinary interests may not revolve around the issues discussed in this thesis. Nevertheless, as the work I have recently been doing with my own students reveals, even a slight shift from the essay can lead to some very interesting results which also warrant further investigation which take forward some of the discussions presented here.

8.7 Final Words

This research was based on what I have observed 'after the event'. I did not set up a research project as such with specific things to analyse and test out in order to explore a theoretical position. My approach was (and continues to be) based firmly in the experience of my own practice and the insights and understandings I get from this. In some ways, what I have been talking about are the observations I make through my daily work with students over many years of practice. The core data, student essays and their reinterpretations in a different genre, was never intended to become 'research

data', but was instead a 'normal' assignment produced as the normal work of a university course. My insights have emerged out of this work and continue to feed into my ongoing work.

In this sense, perhaps, my present study was a reflection on practice or more accurately a series of practices over time – a process of theorised reflection. The core data represents an important moment of realisation for me, and the opportunity to take a particular theoretical path in considering what the data actually represents. The data opened up a chance for me to explore the nature of student academic knowledge in a way that had not been possible for me before. But of perhaps more importance, it has given me the chance to investigate how students can experience their learning differently through the redesign of 'learning' tasks. Moreover, the challenge I gave myself to be able to say something meaningful about the work that my students had produced, led to the development of the theorisations and analytical frameworks that I have discussed here.

In the end, the ideas presented here suggest that there are many different genres with which academic knowledge can be expressed and developed. The essay itself with its insistence on a specific kind of organisational structure and its demands for explicitness in expressing information affords a valuable frame with which to represent academic learning. However, what my work suggests is that it may be risking the chance for other kinds of learning if we put all our eggs into one basket, or rather expect our students to do so. Variation in genre allows for different kinds of responses and different ways of relating to the academic knowledge as my study has shown. It allows students to interact with the information in different ways – linking it to experience and to other kinds of contexts. It deepens the notion of knowledge and embeds the concepts better and allows for new

perspectives on old knowledge that one of my lecturer informants valued in Chapter Two.

The frustrations expressed by students concern their own desires to understand how to do well and their desires to feel free to express their own ideas and interpretations of the 'body of disciplinary knowledge'. Perhaps, as I have suggested, the broader context of HE in Britain today serves to exacerbate the experience as it has led to a much higher stakes arrangement than was traditionally the case. A degree has a different kind of currency compared to when most of the lecturers themselves were undergraduate students. It is an extremely complex and fast developing situation (see e.g. Barnett, 2000) which has been and continues to be the focus of much debate and research. Emerging as it does from this context, my work suggests one way of addressing these competing tensions in that it offers the chance for students to engage not only with the disciplinary concerns of their study but also negotiate the ways in which they can experience their learning differently.

While I do not propose that writing conventional essays is no longer a valid process in student learning and assessment, it certainly is, I feel that it is not the only process. Enabling students to produce their work in different genres results in very different learning experiences. In the case of the students involved in this study, it shifted them away from their institutional identity as 'novice' into a 'creator' in their own right. It encouraged them to develop a far greater degree of reflexivity on the disciplinary knowledge than would normally be possible at their stage of disciplinary 'induction' within the essayist frame and it allowed them to talk about aspects of their learning in ways unavailable in conventional essay writing. Furthermore, it brought about a shift in the ways in which they could make their

disciplinary meanings; an epistemological shift resulting from the use of the new resources afforded by the new genres. In fact, these new productions provided the opportunity for the students to work with exactly the kinds of originality and enthusiasm so desired by the lecturers above and may even have invigorated their subsequent essays. As one student said 'I think I try to make my essays a bit more interesting since writing this.'

Of course, as has been argued (e.g. Kress, 1987, Bhatia, 1997, Hyland, 2000) it is only the powerful who can challenge genre convention. However, in the learning and teaching context, particularly in universities where lecturers (still) have power over what they teach and how they teach it, there is the opportunity to bend the rules. If we, as teachers, incorporate alternatives to the essayist canon then we legitimise it as part of the repertoire of student activity. I hope that this study can contribute to such a challenge to the convention of orthodox cultural practice. After all, if we are to educate people 'for the new century' (Barnett, 1997, title) then we need to offer them the chance to explore their disciplines in different ways and link their learning to both lived and read experience.

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Language, Power and Ideology **an exploration of texts and criticality**

New Half Unit in the development of criticality and writing

TEXT REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



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APPENDIX 1.1

TEXT REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



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APPENDIX 1.2

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF COURSES 2000 – 2001

COURSE:

TEACHER(S):

Course Assessment Forms are designed to provide feedback for the improvement of courses and appraisal of teaching in the School.

Where questions ask you to assign a mark on a 1-5 scale, 1 means "very unsatisfactory", 3 means "average" and 5 means "excellent".

Summation (there is space for further general comments at the end of the form)

Rate the extent to which this course extended your range of knowledge and stimulated your understanding. 1 2 3 4 5

Rate the extent to which this course extended your skills (e.g. essay writing, use of bibliographic sources) 1 2 3 4 5

Course Design and Presentation

Did you think the course was well designed and prepared? 1 2 3 4 5

Did the course fit well with other parts of your degree? 1 2 3 4 5

Were the reading lists and course outlines satisfactory? 1 2 3 4 5

Was the workload for this course **the same as**, **heavier than** or **lighter than** your other courses?

(Underline the appropriate category)

Comment:

Teaching (If you wish, assign a separate category for each teacher)

How effective was teaching in:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----------|
| a. | Formal Lectures | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. | Tutorials / Seminars | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. | Language Classes | 1 2 3 4 5 |

APPENDIX 1.3

As you know, my research involves looking at writing practices in academic contexts. I'm very interested to know what your experience was of doing the re-write assignment for the LPI course.

What I'd like to do is interview you and record the discussion and the questions below are the sort of thing I would like to talk about. I'm sending them out so that you can think about it – but also – if you feel like it you could jot down some responses and mail them back to me as an attachment.

Questions

- Why did you choose this assignment of the three?
- What made you choose the particular essay?
- What determined your choice of rewrite genre?
- Talk about the process involved in the rewrite (e.g. thinking, interpreting, repositioning etc.)
- How did it help you in your understanding of the topic?
- What impact did it have on your feelings towards your discipline?
- What was your feeling in doing it (e.g. fun chore etc?)
- How did it differ (the experience) from writing the original essay?
- Do you think it would have worked the other way round – i.e. writing in the different genre, then writing the essay?

Thanks
Fiona

APPENDIX 2.1

Looking beyond the classroom: a critical view of language and language learning

Assignment

A written discussion (essay) of approximately 3,500 words in response to the following question.

To what extent can theory inform practice?

This question invites you to write about language learning and teaching considering particular aspects such as materials, syllabus, classroom practices, methodologies, ideologies etc.

- What (if any) of the theoretical positions we have been exploring attract your attention? Why?
- Is there a link between theory and practice?
- Does everyone agree that they are interconnected? (Do you think so?)

If so...

- How have different theories have influenced language teaching?

If not....

- Why not?
- How can what we have been looking at enhance your own understanding, knowledge, practice, status etc?

Give examples of aspects of practice (e.g. materials, methodologies, approaches etc.) to support your ideas. These can include your own experiences as well as examples from your reading.

Choose theories and practices that particularly interest you so that you can develop your own understandings through your reflections, your reading, your thinking and your writing.

You are not expected to go deeply into everything - **BUT** it's a good opportunity to overview the whole 'theory-practice' debate and then go into one or two things more deeply to develop and explain your ideas. This is the chance for you to get into something that **YOU** want to explore further!!!

As part of my PhD research into student representation of academic knowledge, I am currently trying to get a sense of how lecturers and tutors read their students' assignments. I'd be very grateful if you could spend a little time going through the questions below. It would be a tremendous help to me. Please feel free to write as much or as little as you like. As is usual with such data, your name will not be made public at any time. I'm hoping to get replies as soon as possible as I'm trying to finally finish this very longstanding project!

Thanks

Fiona English

What influences you in your design of assignment tasks?

What sort of things do you want - do you have an expectation of what they're going to produce for you?

What kind of anticipation do you have when you sit down to read an assignment (dread? excitement? etc.)

At what point might you relax while reading student work?

What 'qualities' do you like to see in a student production?

What don't you like?

Who are you when you're reading student essays? How do you position yourself - what is your identity?

Do you read student writing differently to other academic writing and in what way is it different? Is there ever a crossover?

Do you, in your own teaching, ever discuss your own writing with the students?

APPENDIX 2.3

Methods: Concepts and Practices

Assignment

The aim of this assignment is for you to consider the relationship between the ideas behind ELT practice and to see how these are encouraged by certain published syllabuses and materials. As teachers, you can learn a lot about teaching from the coursebooks you use. You may find that the books are very helpful in developing your own practices as they can offer a good basis for teaching with a clear methodological guidance. Others may be less helpful, offering only the bare bones of a course - leaving the teacher to fill in the rest. Some coursebooks may be problematic to use because the topics might be unsuitable for the cultural context in which they're being used. In those cases teachers have to make decisions about how to deal with this. Sometimes coursebooks might not include everything you need to teach - for instance they may lack a language focus or a writing focus and so on. Again, the teacher would have to think about how to compensate for that lack.

The Task

For this assignment we want you to critically analyse a set of published teaching materials with particular reference to the underlying theoretical and pedagogical principles.

The discussion should be of around 3,500 words.

In this assignment, we want you to thoroughly examine the book suggested (it would be a good idea to buy a copy plus the teacher's book) to see how or if the writers have based their materials on the theories and practices we have been discussing. Once you have looked at the book, you will need to link your thoughts with the readings you have done (or will do), the lectures and the seminars throughout the whole MA course. It is important to see how the different elements become relevant.

Your discussion should also consider the usefulness of the coursebooks in different teaching environments such as here in the UK, in your own cultural teaching situations or in other parts of the world.

You will need to consider how helpful the coursebook is in developing your own practice as a teacher and in which ways.

Analysis

Use these questions to help you focus your analysis of the coursebook itself.

Pedagogical aspects

How are the materials organised and staged both between units (syllabus) and within units?

Is there a particular 'methodological' approach which informs the coursebook?

How are the different activities linked/integrated?

Linguistic aspects

What kind of linguistic elements are evident and how are they presented?

- language input
- language analysis
- language awareness
- skills development

Socio-cultural aspects

Who is the 'ideal' user-group?

How widely usable are they beyond the 'ideal' user-group?

What world view is represented by the book?

How suitable/relevant is the approach implied by the book in different teaching contexts?

APPENDIX 2.3

Writing

After you have analysed the book, think about how you're going to write your assignment. You may wish to give an account of the coursebook itself first and then discuss the ways in which it links into the theories and research we have looked at. You might want to talk about the theories first and then discuss the book. Whatever you do, you need to contextualise your discussion and make it relevant to your own situation and your own learning.

What we're looking for

Your work will be assessed for the analytical content of your discussion and for the ways in which you bring together different and relevant elements from the course. We expect you to incorporate your own understandings of language teaching based on your reading and on your own experiences as a language learner and teacher.

Remember, we want to see your own views and your own interpretations, but these need to be based on the things we have been considering and supported by the reading or research you have done.

APPENDIX 4.1

Language in Africa: Essay 1

7: From a set of Swahili loan words, establish the linguistic source of each word and suggest the probable period from when it was borrowed.

It is not necessary to learn a foreign tongue to become aware that an individual language is far from immune to outside influence. The English with which we converse daily is itself littered with words and phrases borrowed from a host of other languages. Swahili, the lingua franca of the coast of East Africa, is a language rich with loan words. In fact, discounting grammatically derived forms of verbs, pronouns, demonstratives and such words, whether of Bantu or non-Bantu origin, almost fifty percent of Swahili vocabulary comes from non-Bantu sources. Many of these words represent concepts that arrived with the travellers and colonists, whilst others have gone so far as to oust the Bantu equivalents formerly used. One may be tempted to claim that these words fit simple patterns. It could be said that the Portuguese introduced vocabulary relating to shipping, whilst the British introduced a vocabulary pertaining to the new industrial era. This explanation is far too simplistic, and whilst the assumptions may be a good 'rule of thumb', it is the case that each word must be regarded individually, rather than merely observing the meaning and subsequently to categorise it.

The entire coast of East Africa, and as a result the Swahili language, has a rich history of foreign influence. Although records are scarce there is evidence that Hindus, Phoenicians and possibly Assyrians and Jews had visited the region before the time of the New Testament. All these visitors came for the sake of trade, and this is often reflected in the vocabulary borrowed. The monsoon winds played a big part in who was able easily to travel to the land of the Swahili. Very early on the Arabs and Hindus realised that their dhows could be blown south to East Africa by the December monsoon, and be blown back a few months later by the same wind, which had by then changed direction. This Arab influence continued through the birth of Islam and up to the time of the first Portuguese settlers. Following the time of the Portuguese Empire the arrival of British colonists further influenced the development of Swahili and continues to do so up to the present day.

Some of the earliest vocabulary to be introduced to Swahili is of Indian and Persian origin. In fact there are many people scattered about coastal villages who claim they can trace their origin to Persian descent. Tracing the words of Indian origin are

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often traced back to Persian script as they are principally taken from Urdu dictionaries printed in that script. Many examples of borrowed Persian words relate to foodstuffs, which were no doubt a staple trading commodity for the two groups of peoples.

Bilingani	Sticky substance used by women in dressing their hair, also the seeds from which it is made. From ba , good, and dan , seed or berry.
Birinzi	A kind of Pilao. From birinj , rice.
Borohoa	A kind of stew. From bura , savoury dish of minced meat and spices.
Darabi	Rose apple. From dar , a tree, and ab , splendid.
Kunazi	Fruit of the jubejube tree. From qunj , wild plum.
Zarambo	Spirit made from palm wine. From zar , gold, and ab , water.

Hindustani loan words in Swahili are also mainly concerned with petty trading. Although I am not in possession of the Hindi source words I shall include a few examples of Swahili words derived from Hindi.

Bali	An earring
Bima	Insurance
Doti	Length of cloth, loincloth
Kabali	Curry and rice
Koho	Fish-eagle, from the Hindi for a falcon
Pata	A hinge
Upatu	Round metal dish, gong, tray

Perhaps the most significant language to influence Swahili is Arabic. The proximity of the Arab Empire to the East African coast meant that trading routes were easily established. No doubt the first words to be loaned were exclusively those related to trading activities, but the centuries of Arab integration in the region, not just through business, but also intermarriage and prolonged settlement, meant that the vocabulary of Arabic loan words is now vast and encompasses many subjects. It would be futile to begin to list such words, but there are interesting points to be observed in the method by which they have become assimilated. The use of Arabic words does not always follow the pattern used by loan words from other languages. Many loan words are simply 'Swahiliized', and placed into a noun class appropriate to their being loan words. In the 1960's Edgar Polomé investigated the integration of Arabic loans into Swahili and noted that,

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"...the integration of Arabic loans into Swahili morphology shows remarkable features of a thorough interpretation of the forms along strictly Bantu lines. e.g., *wakati* 'time' (from Arabic /waqt/) is reanalyzed as a u class noun with the /w/allomorph of the prefix before initial vowel (w-akati), and accordingly forms its plural according to the pattern of the n class nouns, i.e., *nyakati*; *kiriba*; 'waterskin' (from Arabic/qirba/) is reanalyzed as a [ki] class noun (ki-riba), and accordingly appears in the plural with the [vi] prefix as *viriba*; etc."¹

As can be seen from this, the system of integration for Arabic loan words is not as simple as that for English loans, as will be seen later. This complication is due to a number of factors. Firstly, the timescale over which Arabic words have been introduced is far larger than the contrasting period for English loans, making it more difficult to pinpoint the time when an Arabic loan word was in fact borrowed. It must be noted that we are faced with languages spoken by various types of Arabs, including that spoken by their children born of African mothers, and by those Africans imitating the pronunciation of words, not always the pronunciation given in dictionaries. The influence of Islam is also significant, with many words relating to Islamic practice and doctrine, a good example of which is the Swahili word for the very early morning, *alfajiri*, taken from the Arabic word for early prayers. Aside from such examples the variety of words adopted from Arabic is so great so as to mean it would be fruitless to try and categorise these words as one would loan words from Portuguese or English.

The 15th century saw the arrival of the first European settlers since the Greeks in the time of Ptolemy the Third. In 1498 the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama was welcomed in the town of Malindi and his positive reports of the area led to the arrival of Portuguese forces who had the entire East African region in their control within ten years. This occupation, which lasted until the 18th century, left an indelible mark on the Swahili people and their language. Many of the words borrowed from Portuguese represent activities and items connected with shipping and card-playing. Here are some examples of loan words reflecting the type of artefacts introduced by the Portuguese.

Foronya	Pillowcase
Bendera	Flag
Bomba	Pump
Mpira	Ball
Tabakelo	Snuffbox

¹ Zawawi, Sharifa M. *Loan Words and Their Effect on the Classification of Swahili Nominals*. E.J. Brill:

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In comparison to the Portuguese very few words have been borrowed from French. In 1770 the French introduced clove plantations to Mauritius, and 25 years later to Zanzibar, owing to its strategic position on the route to India. In this period it is suggested that the word **divai**, wine, from *du vin*, was adopted. One of the most commonly used words in East Africa, **shamba**, a plantation, could be derived from the French *champ*, a field, the common Bantu words for plantation being *mgunda* and *konde*. The Turkish have also loaned a small number of words to Swahili, mainly through Arabic or other sources. They relate to the names of military ranks for non-commissioned officers in the native troops of the German regime in Tanganyika territory. They have now fallen out of use but were recalled by those who had been soldiers during the German regime.

Of all the languages to have influenced Swahili English is perhaps the only one which continues to do so. Within the group of English loans there are many which I shall ignore here as they are used only by those engaged in a specific occupation, and as a result cannot be said to be a true part of the Swahili vocabulary. The British interest in Africa has been well documented. The colonisation of large tracts of East Africa by the British, beginning in the 1800's, introduced many new words to the Swahili vocabulary, many of them concerned with aspects of colonial government, and many concerning the new machinery introduced in the dawn of the industrial age. These words were not merely adopted per se however; they are still subjected to the constraints of Swahili grammar. In the 1960's Whiteley entered into the following discussion of English loan words.

"The noun-class affiliation of loans varies. Loans in which the initial elements resemble prefixes will tend to operate these prefixes. Other loans tend to operate either N-N-Class or JI-MA-Class prefixes. Members of both these classes are characterized commonly by an initial zero prefix, and the decision of the speaker to allocate a given loan to one of these classes depends on various factors not always accessible. Size is certainly important: large things tend to be allocated to the JI-MA-Class and small things to the KI-VI-Class, e.g., *malendrova*, 'land-rovers', but *viji Foksvagen*, 'volkswagens'. Similarly nouns denoting persons tend to operate verbal prefixes of M-WA-Class."¹

Leiden. 1979. P.57

¹ Zawawi, Sharifa M. *Loan Words and Their Effect on the Classification of Swahili Nominals*. E.J. Brill: Leiden. 1979. P.57

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Compared to the system that evolved to cater for Arabic loans this is relatively simple. This could be because Whiteley seems far more interested in phonological assimilation whereas Polomé was more concerned with morphological adaptations, but it must also be recognised that the English words were assimilated at a time when understanding of the nature of Swahili grammar was far more advanced. A good example of how English has been assimilated is the Swahili word for 'To pass (an exam)'. The Swahili word *kushinda* would express this meaning, but the verb already has a wide range of meaning, and thus the English word is often used and has become the Swahili '**kupasi**'. Another good example of an English adoption, in this case to fill a deficiency in Swahili vocabulary, is the noun **livu** from the English 'leave' (as in vacation). A Bantu word, *likiso*, would make do, but this was ousted by the Arabic *ruhusa*, meaning permission. So to express the meaning of 'leave' this word would have to be used in a phrase, so the result is the borrowing of **livu** to easily express what was before a cumbersome phrase. Here are some other words Swahili has borrowed from English.

Baisikeli	A bicycle
Daktari	Medical doctor
Gazeti	Newspaper, 'gazette'
Jaji	A judge (Distinguishes from <i>kadhi</i> and <i>liwali</i> , from Islamic law)
Korti	Court of law
Motukaa	A motor car
Polisi	A policeman
Shule	A school
Stesheni	Railway station

The nature of the words Swahili has borrowed from English can be easily seen from this small group, all relating to fairly modern concepts associated with the industrial age.

Swahili is particularly suitable for the acquisition of loan words. Its grammatical structure is not only able to assimilate such words, but is also able to adapt them to the extent that one can barely differentiate them from Bantu words. Its position as a lingua franca for such a large region means that it is rightly accepting of such words. Some travellers, upon hearing 'bastardized' (as they see it) versions of their own words, comment that Swahili should not be allowed to degenerate into some sort of 'pidgin'

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language. This view is rather short sighted. Swahili has always been ready to accept loan words, and it is this willingness which allows it to remain a healthy, living language. If it were to resist such adaptation it would risk losing its status as the leading East African language and could even slip into disuse. With the prospect of many African languages falling to wayside in the new era of globalisation it is good to see that Swahili continues to move with the times as it has always done.

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Language, Power and Ideology

Essay 2

Swahili Loan Words

An essay aimed at a younger audience.

'Laissez faire', 'Déjà vu', and that's only a start. We all speak English every day, but do we realise how often we use foreign words and phrases. And this word stealing is not always as plain to see as the examples above. 'What country do you think of when you wash your hair?' Silly question is what you are all thinking. But did you know that shampoo is a Hindi word; that's the language that all the people in India speak. So if the English can go around stealing words from other languages then why can't other languages do the same? The answer is, they do! Some of you may have heard of a language called Swahili. People speak it in Eastern Africa, and it is a main language in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. In these countries people who live near each other often speak different languages, depending on which village or area they come from. But when they need to talk to each other the language they speak is Swahili. Because of this people call Swahili a 'lingua franca'. Since so many people use Swahili it has managed to borrow a lot of words from other languages. In fact, not counting words like he, she, at, on etc., over half of the words in Swahili are borrowed from other languages.

Travellers, who visited East Africa hundreds of years ago to buy and sell goods, introduced many of these words. Some of the words represent what the travellers brought with them, things that had never been seen in Africa before they arrived. The Portuguese sailors introduced words about ships, and later the British brought words for things like machines and cars. But don't think it's that easy to spot a stolen word in Swahili. Rules like that may be a good start, but we are going to have to look at things a lot more closely than that.

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Let's start by finding out a few things about East Africa. People have written about travelling there thousands of years ago. Before the time when Jesus was born (over 2000 years ago!) Jewish people and others had written about going there. Try and find a map of the area, a big one of the world would be best. Look at the coast of Kenya and Tanzania and then look to the Northeast. Hundreds of years ago people would travel from India and Arabia (Arabia is the old name for all the countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen) to buy and sell with the Africans. In Geography class you might have heard of the Monsoon. It is a kind of big storm that you get every year in that part of the world. What is important though is that this wind blows southwest in December, and this blew the boats from India to Africa. Then, a few months later in March, the winds change direction and blow Northeast and this would help take the ships back home. For hundreds of years The Arabs went a step further and actually took control of East Africa, ruling it as their own. After them Portuguese people arrived and took over, followed by the British, until the 1960's, when the Swahili people began to rule themselves again. With each group of people who arrived in East Africa a batch of new words would arrive, and it's these words that we're going to look at now.

Some of the first words to be borrowed by Swahili were of Indian and Persian origin (Persia is now called Iran). Some East Africans even say they can trace their family all the way back to descendants of the Persian people. Here are some words that Swahili borrowed from Persian:

Bilingani	Sticky substance used by women to treat their hair, also the seeds from which it is made. From ba , good, and dan , seed or berry.
Birinzi	A kind of Pilao rice. From birinj , rice.

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Borohoa	A kind of stew. From bura , savoury dish of minced meat and spices.
Darabi	Rose apple. From dar , a tree, and ab , splendid.
Kunazi	Fruit of the jubejube tree. From qunj , wild plum.
Zarambo	Alcoholic drink made from palm wine. From zar , gold, and ab , water.

The Indian language is called Hindi. Here are some words that Swahili has borrowed from Hindi:

Bali	An earring
Bima	Insurance
Doti	Length of cloth, loincloth
Kabali	Curry and rice
Koho	Fish-eagle, from the Hindi for a falcon
Pata	A hinge
Upatu	Round metal dish, gong, tray

But these two languages have had little influence compared to Arabic. There are so many Arabic words in Swahili that it would be silly to try and list any here. The main reason for this is that Arabia was so near to East Africa. It will have been one of the first places that the Arabs went when they left Arabia to try and find people to buy and sell stuff with. But the Arabs did not just appear for three months a year when the winds blew them there. They came and took over the area. They converted many people to Islam, their religion. They married local women and they introduced their own laws and other ways of life. So the words borrowed from Arabic were not just words that people would use for buying and selling, they were words that people would use every day. The Arabs were there for a long time too; so the words changed as they were spoken by different people over time, including the children of Arabs who now lived there, and by people who imitated the way the words were said rather than pronouncing them the way the dictionaries want you to. The

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words became a proper part of the language and adopted Swahili grammar. The influence of the Arabs on Swahili is so huge that people have written whole books on how Arabic words have become Swahili words. In fact some Africans think that to be Swahili is to be partly Arab, as it was not just words but an entire culture and way of life that was borrowed.

After the Arabs came the Portuguese. In about 1500 a Portuguese explorer called Vasco de Gama arrived in East Africa. The Portuguese were famous for explorers, including Columbus, the man who discovered America. Vasco had sailed around the Southern tip of Africa (maps out again) to try and get to India. He could not go through Europe overland as the Turks ruled that area and would not let him. On his way he stopped in East Africa and he was given such a good welcome, and thought the place was so good that he went home to Portugal and told everyone about what a great place it was. The Portuguese sent lots more people back and within ten years they ruled it as the Arabs had done. They stayed until the 18th century and left their mark on the Swahili people and their language. Many of the words they introduced were to do with ships and card playing. Here are some for you to have a look at:

Foronya	Pillowcase
Bendera	Flag
Bomba	Pump
Mpira	Ball
Tabakelo	Snuffbox

The Portuguese added many more words to Swahili than the French did. In 1770 the French were growing crops on Mauritius (the group of small islands to the Southeast of Africa. Look on the map again). They needed to transport these crops to India and would stop off

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at Zanzibar, the island just off the coast of Tanzania. It is suggested by some that in this period a few words were borrowed from French. The Swahili word **divai**, the word for wine, could be from the French for wine, *du vin*. And the word **shamba**, which means plantation, could be from the French word for a field, *champ*. Another language to only lend a few words is Turkish, but these are to do with the ranks of German army soldiers, and are remembered only by those who served in the German army when they were involved in Tanzania.

So this leaves us with a chance to look at our own language, English. The British became interested in Africa in the 1800's, a time when many European nations were trying to claim large parts of Africa for themselves. The British controlled huge areas of the continent, so much that you could walk from Cairo to Cape Town on British controlled land. Like those who came before them they ruled the area as if it were Britain itself, and as a result a large number of English words were introduced to Swahili. The British brought with them a host of new machines that had only just begun to be used in Britain. It was called the industrial age, and Britain was leading the way with many inventions such as steam power. Because of this many of the words which were borrowed are to do with these new machines and gadgets. They also introduced words to do with the new form of government. But, as with the Arabic words, these words became a proper part of Swahili, with proper grammar. The difference was that now people knew something about Swahili grammar, and the borrowed words obeyed the rules, unlike the Arabic words which just slipped into the vocabulary. Some English words filled gaps in the Swahili vocabulary, such as the word they use for 'pass', as we would say we 'passed' an exam. There is a Swahili word that was used for this, but it also meant a lot of other things, so the new word, **kupasi**, was adopted. Here are a few more words that Swahili has borrowed from English:

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Baisikeli	A bicycle
Daktari	Medical doctor
Gazeti	Newspaper, 'gazette'
Jaji	A judge
Korti	Court of law
Motukaa	A motor car
Polisi	A policeman
Shule	A school
Stesheni	Railway station

Unlike many other languages, Swahili is very good at accepting words from other languages. The main reason for this is that it is a 'lingua franca'. We speak English as a first language, so things are easy for us. But think about what we would do if the people who lived in the next village spoke a different language? What would we do when we went to the till in a shop and had to speak to someone from the other village? We would have to use a second language that we both spoke. This is a major function of Swahili, and is also why it is so easy for it to borrow words. To be able to carry on doing this job it must be able to accept new words easily; otherwise it would not be any good as a 'lingua franca'. Some people may tell you to speak proper English and not to use new, trendy words. To say that about Swahili would be silly. Because it is this that means that Swahili can continue as a living language which changes with time. Not like Latin, which is dead and has not changed for hundreds of years. So next time you hear a strange word, try and find out where it has come from, and try and use it again some time!

Further reading:

There are many books related to this topic, but perhaps you will find these two the most interesting.

Johnson, F. *The Derivation of Non-Bantu Words in Swahili*. SOAS Manuscript, Ms380630.

Marsh, Z.A. & Kingsworth, G.W. *An Introduction to the History of East Africa*. Cambridge. 1966.

APPENDIX 4.2

An account of the origin and present day function of one African lingua franca

The word 'Swahili' is Arabic in origin and means coast. Swahili is spoken on the East coast of Africa by many as a first language and has spread into the interior as far as the Congo as a lingua franca. Though Swahili uses words adopted from Arabic, English and Portuguese it has the definite structure of a Bantu language and is written in the Latin script.

There are different schools of thought as to how Swahili originated. One idea suggests that as the Arab immigrants married Bantu women they adopted some Bantu words while their wives learnt some Arabic words, thus their children grew up learning a combination of both languages and with each new generation Swahili developed further until it reached its present form. Another hypothesis suggests that Swahili is a mixture of different Bantu languages combined with Arabic. Though contrary to either of these explanations close linguistic analysis of the Swahili language reveals that Arabic has made little impact on the structure of the language but has contributed to the vocabulary, this implies that Swahili was adopted by the Arab settlers and became naturally interlaced with words from their mother tongue.

Swahili is presumed to have started its life in the region of the Tana river estuary and to have spread further when Arabs and Persians settled in the area due to trading, thus spreading the language along their trading routes. In 975 Ali Ben Sultan al Hassan Ben Ali bought the Island of Kilwa in exchange for a few bails of textiles and it became an important trading center encouraging the use of Swahili along the coast south of the Zambezi River. As more and more traders crossed the western Indian Ocean Swahili spread further than the East Coast onto the Comoro islands, the North West coast of Madagascar and the southern tip of Arabia. The progression of Swahili into the interior of the continent was a much slower process and was fuelled by Arab slave hunting in the Nineteenth century, as the slave hunters used Arabic as their mode of communication. Swahili spread in correspondence with the routes that the slave hunters and traders took, it flourished in the area of lake Nyasa due to successful trading in the area, and centrally it found footholds around Lake Tanganika and into the upper Congo, the Luba River and Katanga. In the north it spread to Kilimanjaro and on to Lake Victoria.

Colonization played a large part in establishing Swahili as a lingua franca. When Belgium took control of the Congo under King Leopold the second, any Swahili people in the Congo area at that time were not permitted to leave. This forced them to create their own community within the Congo, mixing with the native population and promoting the use of Swahili. Swahili was used within the Congo to such an extent that the Belgium authorities attempted to introduce Swahili as the national language of education and before the First World War troops were instructed in Swahili. While the Congo was under Belgian rule the East coast fell under German and English powers. The government schools of German East Africa failed in their attempts to instruct in German so they turned to Swahili as the language of education. Due to its Bantu roots Swahili proved to be an easy language for people to learn as their mode of communicating with people of different vernacular languages. So due to practicalities

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Germany began to promote Swahili as the language of government and army administration and use in the postal services.

The European settlers used Swahili to communicate with speakers of different European languages as well as with the autonomous population, Arabs and Persians. With colonization came the building of roads and railways that inevitably lead to languages being spread due the easier accessibility of travel. As well as this the construction process was instructed in Swahili as the laborers common mode of communication as they came from different language backgrounds.

There is evidence of Swahili as a literary form as early as 1332 when it was used to write epic poems on the island of Kilwa. At this time the Arabic script would have been used as the method of recording. It was only in the beginning of the Twentieth century that the Latin script was introduced by the German authorities. Written Swahili is based on the Swahili spoken on the island of Zanzibar which has become the standardized prestigious form. This decision was influenced by the Christian missionaries who were eager to standardize Swahili in order for it to be used in education though there was some ambivalence due to Swahili's strong Islamic identity. In 1925 the government of Tanganyika set up the Central Publishing committee to publish schoolbooks in Swahili, then in 1930 the Inter-Territorial Language Committee was established officialising the Zanzibar dialect as the standard form.

The main resistance to the spread of Swahili came from large tribal groups such as the Masi and Kikuyu who saw it as a threat to their vernacular languages and therefore their identity. It could be said that the further away you move from the center of a tribal area the more likely Swahili is to be spoken. An example of Swahili being positively accepted by a tribal group is the case of Chaga who began using Swahili once they gained political unity since Swahili was perceived to be the most neutral common language. As already mentioned there was also resistance from certain groups of missionaries who believed that the use of Swahili would jeopardize their work due to its Islamic associations, some colonial officials were of similar opinions. Other reasons for Swahili being rejected are its negative connotations with relation to its use in slave hunting and more recently by authorities as a means of intimidation.

Swahili varies considerably linguistically and functionally from country to country and within countries depending on the community. As with all lingua franca there is a higher population of male speakers than female as men generally make up the work force and are therefore more likely to enter situations where a common mode of communication needs to be established. For the same reason younger generations are more likely to have a good command of the language whereas older people are more inclined to use their vernacular language.

It is estimated that between twenty and twenty-five million people speak Swahili in Africa. It is difficult to present an exact figure, as the degree to which people speak is variable, as is the form in which they speak it, due to the many pidgin and Swahili

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dialects. Swahili has remained a first language on the off shore islands of Lamu, Pemba, Zanzibar, the Bajin Islands, the Mafia islands, the Kerimba islands, the Comoro islands and on the North West coast of Madagascar. As well as these islands there runs a ten mile wide belt from the Juba River estuary islands in the North to the Lurio river in the South where Swahili exists as a first language, the same can be said for pockets of the Congo and else where in East Africa due to Swahili immigrants who settled during Arabic rule.

While Swahili is the national language of Tanzania and is used in school instruction, politics, trade unions and Newspapers it is less prestigious in Kenya where English has gaining prominence as a lingua franca. This is probably due to the larger percentage of English settlers in Kenya and the language policy of Kenya promoting the vernacular languages, though Swahili still has some use in school instruction especially in areas populated by speakers of different vernacular languages. Another explanation for Swahili being used less in Kenya could be that the standard form deriving from the island of Zanzibar is far removed from the pigeon form which was already in use in Kenya, thus learning difficulties were created. The situation is similar but to a worse degree in Uganda where Swahili failed as the national language of school instruction and the vernacular languages are now promoted with English used a lingua franca. That said Swahili is used in the North and in the police force. In Rwanda and Burundi Swahili is used only to a very limited extent.

There are a very large number of Swahili dialects that have derived from specific social situations, some which are dying out because of a change in social circumstances. Due to the function of some of these dialects, such as the mode of common communication in the army and work force the dialect has under gone considerable simplification and lost much of its structure until it can only be called a pidgin. An example of a dialect that is now redundant is kivita which once functioned as a war pidgin. The dialect of Swahili spoken in the East Congo is interesting in that it incorporates the use of Ngwana Swahili, now the standard form, with the vernacular languages of the Luba and Mongo. This is due to Swahili settlers mixing with the native population. From this view point analysing the linguistic content of the different Swahili dilects could reveal a lot of social history. The Swahili spoken in Katanga derived from necessity in the industrialization of the copper mines and while it is spoken amongst laborers and by the younger generations, in family situations the vernacular language takes precedence. Examples of Swahili pidgins would be Kisetla, which was used amongst European settlers in communication with servants and farm laborers and Kihindi, which is used by the Indian population of East Africa.

In Tanzania an interesting linguistic situation has occurred due to Swahili being combined to different degrees with the vernacular languages and English. Unconsciously the vernacular languages are frequently mixed with Swahili and spoken as if they belong as one language, it is through the education system that the different languages become viewed as separate units. In the primary school, while school instruction may be in Swahili outside school the pupils are still most likely to converse in their vernacular language unless of course they come from different language backgrounds. It is in the secondary school when pupils from different cultural backgrounds are assured to come into contact, that Swahili takes over as the

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method of communication both in school and socially, because of this pupils are able to master it as a language and become confident in using it in its different registers. In secondary schools as well as Swahili developing into a fluid medium, a lot of importance is placed on obtaining a good command of English, which is not only taught as a subject but also in teaching other subjects. It has even been suggested that a pupils academic achievements are judged by their ability to use the English language. Though at this stage English has established its self as the language of learning it is learnt only in a formal context, which ensures pupils rely on Swahili in more colloquial settings. After schooling Swahili is generally perceived to be the main method of communication used interchangeably with English, where as the vernacular languages become secondary.

So it is evident that the three different language types perform different functions with in Tanzanian society but there is also some over lap, which results in constant code switching both conversationally and in writing. The vernacular language is used to establish and assert cultural identity; due to its basic form it has a limited usage in urban society and is there for restricted to rural life. Swahili on the other hand is perceived as the national language of communication with English being used for business, legal transactions and higher education. The reason for this being that English is more advanced in terms of coping the terminologies required in modern technological settings. As Swahili endeavors to develop further in order to meet the needs of the modern, the gap between English and Swahili is never closed, as English also continues to advance. For this reason English will constantly be used as a point of reference and to an extent influence the Swahili vocabulary and grammar.

Due to the limitations of Swahili code switching from Swahili to English is perceived as the norm even in academic discussion. As well as the technical reasons for using the different languages there are of course the emotive ones. A hierarchy can be witnesses, with the vernacular perceived as the most inclusive and English as the most socially distanced. For example English is more likely to be used in authoritarian situations and when this is not possible Swahili could be substituted but with English intonations.

As well as English influences Arabic continues to influence Swahili as a language and Swahili literary forms and songs. All though Swahili draws from other language sources it is seen as a nationalistic language and its success as a lingua franca in East Africa could be attributed to this and its strong association with the Africanism that evolved after gaining independence from colonial rule. English's growing prestige as a dominant world language could be seen as a hindrance to Swahili's progression but it is difficult to imagine English ever performing the same functions of Swahili in that Swahili has become a common medium for people of different vernaculars who other wise would have no means of communicating.

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Pg213-227

- Status and use of African Lingua Francas

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Pg15-45 pg47-104

- Advances in the study of societal multilingualism

ABDULAZIZ MKILIFI, A.M.

Pg130-147

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(1)

Introduction:

I have chosen to present my account of Swahili as a lingua franca in the form of a short play, though almost a monologue. As I believe the use of a spoken medium to be appropriate in this instance in relation to Africa's strong oral culture. The subject matter can easily be adapted into a narrative account as it is an historical account of Swahili's development into a common medium of communication. On a personal level by re-crafting my existing essay I am given the opportunity to become more fluid with the concepts presented in it.

I propose to transform the essay into a bedtime story, being told by a parent to their two children. In doing so I am able to simplify the ideas and slip into a world that allows room for the imagination as well as the intellect.

The parent:

The sex of the speaker is of irrelevance but whether male or female they should not behave in a way that emphasizes or draws attention to their gender. They should be in their early thirties and dressed in simple clothing made of natural fibers such as linen and cotton and perhaps wear an item/s of jewelry of distinctive 'ethnic' origin. Most importantly they are intellectual and politically correct to the extreme. During the monologue the speaker must slip in and out of directly addressing the children and their own ruminations. The parent is sensitive and loving and overtly conscious of how they are bringing up their children and what they should and should not be exposed to.

The audience must be made aware of an inner struggle. This is a person who needs to find answers, who has an inexhaustible capacity for knowledge and is exasperated by their own limitations. They are someone who feels personally vindicated by the world's unnecessary complications, which obscure the simple beauties of human life.

Children:

The children are important in the narrative as they provide an audience to interact with the native and influence how it is told. They are eight and nine years old, one male one female. They are 'little adults' tucked up in bed, who watch their parent with ore, wonder and often bemusement. It should not be completely clear as to whether they are mentally absorbing what is being said or are simply enjoying the rise and fall of their parents voice and the dynamics of the performance.

Set:

The set is not of immediate significance to the piece; it must be minimal and modern with two single beds and an armchair to the left. Perhaps the beds could have patched work quilts on them and the wooden floor a Moroccan rug. A giant world map can be stuck to the walls behind the beds, with pins, scribbles and highlighter-indicating places they have been, want to go, or various important and trivial facts the children have learnt. Some of the visible toys should serve an educational functional and not be associated with popular culture. It is clearly a conscientious household striving to create a corner of individuality and safety in a contrary, consumer world. If there is the possibility of having a window it should be to the right of the beds so that the

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parent can glance towards it in unconscious reference. Through the window should be a view of an intimidating grey city, harsh and cold against the bedrooms warmth. The city serves as a contrast to the African world the parent talks about and represents the cruelty of reality against the fictitious world that is created with words.

THE PLAY: Culturally confused

Parent:

At this point seated in the armchair addressing the children.

"Can you remember what our bedtime story was about yesterday?"

Child 1:

A little exasperated by the parents demand for a contribution and the constant analysis of their development.

"Yessssssss! It was about the different way people live in Nepal and Bud-B-B-

Parent:

"Buddhism! Yes. Excellent, and I'm only asking because I could see you were both very tired but we talked about some interesting things"

Child 2:

"I want to be a Yogi! I want to be a yogi!"

Parent:

"Well that will be difficult as to be a yogi you have to be-

Child 2:

"I want to be the first female Yogi! Will you still love me if I'm a Yogi? You can come and do yoga and smoke cannabis with me and my Yogi friends and we can go on boat trips down the Ganges"

Parent:

"Yes of course I'd still love you, may be I'll come and be a yogi with you"

Child 2:

"No just visits, please."

Parent:

"OK any way today I thought I could tell you the story about how Swahili came to be such an important language in East Africa. People always talk about the importance of English as a world language but they rarely consider that there exists many other important non-European languages all over the world. People need to learn one these important languages so they can talk to people who have different first languages to them selves.

Child 1:

"Umm Why would they be speaking to people with a different language?"

Parent:

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"That's a good question you bright little spark! Now in the situation of Africa there are two hundred thousand different languages spoken. It is not like in England. In Africa if you go from one village to the next you are likely to find a different language being spoken because the people in the different villages are likely to have different ethnic identities- this means they live their lives in different ways to each other. People often refer to the people in different social groups are different tribes but it is best not to use this word as it has negative associations"

Child 1:

"So it's a bad word like 'SHIT' or 'FUCK'!"

Child 2:

"Ha, ha! YOU LITTLE TRIBE! I HAD TRIBE OF DAY! TRIBE YOU! TRIBE-

Parent:

"Yes o.k. Now! I think you both know it is not a swear word! It is simply not a very positive word because it has been misused in the past. Westerns have used it to describe collective groups of an indigenous population-meaning natives, but in a way, which suggests they are primitive or even savage people"

Child 1:

"Like they are cavemen?"

Parent:

"Yes that's right, some thing like that. Any way because there are so many different languages spoken so close to each other the people need to find a language they can have in common with each other in order for them to be able to talk to each other and understand each other. One of the main reasons why they might need to speak to each other is because of trading. They may want to sell different things to each other like cloth or spices. This was the case in East Africa and that is why Swahili became such an important language there.

I think the way languages develop and their different functions inside society is a very interesting subject, especially in somewhere like Africa where so many different languages are spoken, each language having a different purpose or symbolic of a different type of culture. But this a complicated subject and there is in point on me rattling on if all you want to do is take the Mick and you are not really interested".

Child 1:

"I am interested you know I love Africa and I want to be a Masi!"

Child 2:

"But you just said you want to be a yogi! You don't really know what you want to be, you just don't want to be ENGLISH!"

Child 1:

"So what! That's my business; it's up to me what I want to be! Why do you always have to pick on me, you always think what you want is the right thing and every thing else is wrong -so ENGLISH! No even worse you should be American! From now on I'm going to call you YANK, you stupid YANK!"

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Parent:

"Right you two that is enough! Why can't you just live side by side with your separate ideas instead of wanting to control each other? You have always been brought up as individuals and you have never been played against one another so maybe you should try respecting each other instead of constantly competing. Have you ever consider there is no right and wrong -what is good for one person could be completely wrong for the other"

Child 2:

"Yes O.K, O.K"

Parent:

"Shall I continue then?"

Child 2:

"As long as we can do the history of McDonalds tomorrow!"

Child 1:

"Ha,ha, he, he!"

Why do you say 'taking the Mick' to us but with your friends you say 'taking the piss' because I've heard you. It's silly! And we are not aloud to swear at home but you know we swear every where else, sometimes I swear on purpose, like in every sentence because I know I won't get told off and it is fun".

Parent:

"Umm..... I'm not impressed with your confession! At the end of the day it is up to you what language you use but some people might be put off you or think less of you for using that sort of language, so they won't really get to know who you are. I some times swear with my friends because I know it is acceptable to do that with them. It is all to do with deciding what language is the most appropriate to use in that circumstance. When I'm with my friends I speak in a much less formal way because we are very familiar with each other. We use the same sort of language style because it is a way of constantly reestablishing our friendship and makes us feel close to each other. Just like you two - when you are not fighting! You two must have words that have slightly different meanings when you use them with each other rather than if you used them in a different situation, because you know each other so well. Sometimes when you are talking together you don't even have to finish the sentence because you automatically know what the other one is talking about."

Child 1:

"Like you maggot infested - hamburger eating, fascist YANK! ONLY JOKING, ONLY JOKING!"

Parent:

"Even the phrase 'only joking'! There are only certain situations when it would seem right to use it. Even the way I speak to you two when I explain things. I try not to over complicate things but at the same time I don't want to make things too simple and patronize you"

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Child 1:

"It doesn't matter I don't care!"

Parent:

"Thank you. So anyhow I am constantly thinking about the way in which I say things. Every one is. In England this is usually done with the style of English that we use to each other, called the 'register' but in East Africa and of course else where in Africa this is sometimes not just done by changing the register but also by changing the actual language you are using to speak to each other"

Child 2:

"Complicated!"

Parent:

"Yes perhaps but it's to do with the way we look at things. Here learning a language is turned into an academic exercise where as in Africa to grow up learning another language is no big deal, most people can speak at least three different languages"

Child 1:

"How come?"

Parent:

" Well perhaps one parent comes from one village speaking one language and the other parent comes from a village speaking another language. In a country like Tanzania in a family with this type of situation the parents will probably talk to each other in Swahili. The child will learn the parent's different first languages and Swahili, which will probably be the language, which they use to speak to each other. Then when they go to school its gets even more confusing because they are most likely to be taught in Swahili but maybe some of their friends will speak the same languages as their parents so they will constantly be switching from one language to the next. English is also taught as a language and by secondary school all the teaching is usually done in English"

Child 1:

"Why?"

Parent:

" It is perhaps a little easier for the teachers to use English because Swahili doesn't have all the technical terms that English has because East Africa is not as technically developed as the West. And even though new Swahili words are made every day it will never catch up with English because new English words are made every day. So English will always be a point of reference."

Child 2:

"Why doesn't every one just learn English"?

Parent:

"One of the main reasons why Swahili became so important was because it is an African language. English was used in colonial times. Remember we have talked

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about colonialism before. When European took control of countries that never belonged to them. So you can imagine what native people think of English. Imagine if some country with a foreign culture took over England and made English people work for them, constantly asserting their power. You're probably not going to like their language because it will remind you of all the bad things they have done to your country. It was a bit like this in Tanzania. Swahili was seen in as a nationalist language, a way of retaining culture. If every one spoke English don't you think the world would be a boring place. A language isn't just about words its about who you are. People who study language are called linguists and they believe if you study a certain language you are able to learn about the way that the people who speak it think. If every one just spoke English it would be like saying the English way is the only way to live your life!"

O.K I'm starting to get very carried away now!

Let me show you on the map where Swahili is spoken. It's presumed to have originated around here in the Tana River estuary. When Arabs came from across here, the Indian Ocean. Swahili started to spread. The Arabs were great traders. They learn Swahili so that they could communicate with the people who lived on the Islands. They started to travel around so they could sell more and to other people. The other people obviously couldn't speak Arabic, they couldn't speak Swahili either but because it was nearer to their own language they learnt it. Because Swahili was spread due to the Arabs it has come to contain a lot of Arabic words.

Swahili is spoken on these Islands, you can see the bigger ones Lamu and Zanzibar. The written Swahili comes from Zanzibar. It is spoken on this bit of Madagascar. In Tanzania it is the main language and here in Kenya it is important but English is also spoken a lot. In Uganda it is not so popular but it is spoken a lot in the North and it is spoken in some parts of the Congo.

You know in English people from different parts of the country speak English differently well it is the same for Swahili but because it is spread over a much larger area the variety between the different types of Swahili is very large.

Sorry I can see you are getting bored now- but I just want to tell you one more thing!

It was only late in the eighteen hundreds that Swahili became a written language. Africa is not like England. Here we write about every thing we think is important, where as in Africa people pass on information by telling each other stories. Story telling is important, it is only Western influence, which brought about the idea of recording information in writing"

Child 2:

"If you lived in Africa people would put cello tape over your mouth or every one would always be asleep!"

Parent:

"I often think about the things I tell you and what is the point of it all. I tell you about different cultures because I want you to know that the way we live is not the only way

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to live. But the very fact that I am the one telling you these things is a contradiction in it's self. I can only tell you from my Western viewpoint, I can never give you the insider's view of a culture. So really I am reiterating the Western ideas about a culture. I sometimes believe these cultures to have a better standard of living because they are living in their experiences, in the now. In the West we need to continually intellectualize and complicate our lives. We forget the simple things that make us happy. Perhaps that is what I am doing with your childhoods.

O.K. No more bedtime stories for a little while.

Umm.... sorry if you ever, ummm... decide you do want to know more about this. I have some books on my shelf; African Languages by Hein, African language development and the state by Furnace, the Status and use of African lingua francas by Heine and Advances in the study of societal multilingualism by Abdulaziz Mkilifi.

APPENDIX 4.3

Student Name/Number:

Seminar Instructor:

Seminar Date and Time: Mon / 4.00-5.00PM

Introduction To Economic Analysis

Word Count: 1730

Essay 1: (Essay Topic 2)

Interest Rate Determinants.

Abstract

‘The rate of interest is a real phenomenon, determined by the twin forces of thrift and productivity.’

‘The rate of interest is a monetary phenomenon, determined by the interaction between the supply of and the demand for money’

I will try to explain to which schools of economic thought these two statements belong to, respectively.

I will then explain the main points about each theory, also stating the implications of both views for the ability of the economy to maintain full employment equilibrium.

Classical Theory

‘The rate of interest is a real phenomenon, determined by the twin forces of thrift and productivity.’ This statement belongs to the Classical economic school of thought. The foundation for Classical theory was laid with the publication of the book ‘An Inquiry Into The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations’, by Adam Smith, 1776. The Classical macroeconomic model argues for a small inactive government role, with a *laissez-faire*, hands off government policy towards the economy. By leaving the market to work by itself, thus better achieving the goals of price stability, full employment and economic growth.

The real determinants of the rate of real interest, r , as laid out in the Classical theory are thrift and productivity. Thrift refers to the rate at which consumers will exchange current for future consumption i.e. consumer saving, S , (Economics, page 345). Saving is income not spent on consumption. Productivity refers to investment. Investment, I , is the stream of income/output that goes to capital equipment (Blankenburg, Week 2, page 5). In Classical theory, S is a positive function of r , $S=s(r)$. I is seen as a negative function of r , $I=I(r)$. To illustrate these relationships, consider:

A shift in r from r_0 to r_1 results in S_0 moving up to S_1 (positive relationship) and I_0 moves down to I_1 (negative relationship).

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Savings - Investment Equilibrium

From the definition of gross domestic product (aggregate demand)

Aggregate Demand = Consumption + Investment + Government Spending + Net Exports

Assume no government (government spending = 0) and no foreign trade (net exports = 0)

Aggregate Demand = Consumption + Investment

Since, Income = Consumption + Savings

Aggregate Demand = (Income - Savings) + Investment

if, Aggregate Demand = Income in equilibrium

then, Savings = Investment in equilibrium

In an algebraic model:

$$AD = C + I + G + (X - M)$$

$$Y = C + S$$

where,

AD = aggregate demand

C = consumption

I = investment

G = government spending

X - M = net exports (exports, X - imports, M)

Y = income

S = savings

If $G = (X - M) = 0$, then

$$AD = C + I$$

Since $Y = C + S$, or rearranging $C = Y - S$, and substituting into equation for AD:

$$AD = Y - S + I$$

In equilibrium $AD = Y$, therefore in equilibrium it must also be true:

$$S = I$$

By proving that $S = I$, the equilibrium r is determined when $S = I$.

(proof of $S = I$ taken from *Economics, Lecture Notes Week 2*)

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Flexibility of r , Full Employment Output, Classical

A cornerstone of Classical theory is Say's Law. Say's Law implies that supply creates its own demand i.e. total production = total income. All income is spent on consumption or investment.

Through flexible r , prices and wages, the economy always maintains full employment output equilibrium.

When $S = I$, the following applies:

At S_0 , I_0 , equilibrium r is at r_0 . If however, due to any real factor e.g. prospect of war, a recession hits the economy. Income would decline, causing less consumption. Consumers will be more wary in spending their money, thus consuming less and saving more. Investment would fall as investors would be less upbeat about the economy, causing $S > I$. S and I would be out of equilibrium, moving r higher to r_1 . Also, AD is less than AS at full employment output. To regain r equilibrium, there must be interest rate flexibility. Classical theory states that in a recession, r would decline, therefore S declines, restoring part of the loss of personal consumption expenditures. I would increase, replacing the balance of the decline in personal consumption expenditures. AD returns to level of AS at full employment output, but the composition of demand has changed, with less consumption and more investment. So, I_0 and r_2 are our new curves.

If in a recession and investment doesn't respond through flexible interest rates, Classical theory states that prices and wages will also adjust to return the economy to full employment output. With a reduction in AD , prices fall (supply chasing fewer buyers). Purchasing power of money increases and AD returns to original level with full employment.

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Keynesian Theory

‘The rate of interest is a monetary phenomenon, determined by the interaction between the supply of and the demand for money.’ This theory of the determinants of r is a Keynesian theory. Keynesian theory was first developed by John Maynard Keynes in ‘The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money’, 1936. Keynes had tried to explain the high levels of unemployment and low levels of output experienced during the Great Depression of the 1930s. After the 1936 publication, many economists of the time began to follow Keynes’ approach to the economy, hence Keynesian theory.

Keynesian theory states that r is determined by money demand and money supply, not thrift and productivity as in Classical theory. Keynes believed that since consumption is a function of income and since savings is the difference between income and consumption, then savings is also primarily a function of income and not interest rates. Keynes's view of investment also differed from the classical view. The classical theory suggests that investment is also primarily a function of the interest rate. Keynes didn't accept this. First, Keynes suggested that during a recession or depression the interest rate may already be so low that it cannot go any lower. Interest rates are not flexible during economic downturns. Consequently, you don't get the needed stimulus to I and AD that a drop in the real interest rate might give you. Second, Keynes believed that even if the interest rate was able to decline significantly, investment would not be responsive. For example, during a recession or depression when demand has fallen, would a firm would not invest in new production equipment when its existing equipment was under utilized.

Keynesian theory instead argued that r is determined by money demand and money supply. Central Bank controls the nominal money supply in an economy. The real money supply, M_s , is the nominal money supply divided by the price level p . By assuming that the price of goods is fixed, this implies that M_s is also controlled by Central Bank and is therefore fixed in the short run.

Under Classical theory, real money demand, M_d , follows: $M_d = \text{Income} + \text{Transactions} + \text{Md}$. Keynesian theory approaches M_d in a different way. It specifies that people hold money for three reasons: transactions, precautionary and speculative motives. The transactions motive is the same as M_d in the Classical approach. The precautionary motive is that people hold money against unexpected things. This depends on income and lifestyle and is quite income inelastic. The speculative motive for M_d is as r Opportunity cost of money M_d , where Opportunity cost of money is

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the interest given up by holding money rather than bonds (Economics, page 422).

Combining the three approaches to M_d with M_s , Keynesian theory achieves the following:

The equilibrium r is achieved when $M_s = M_d$, at r_0 . Now consider an economy in recession. Falling incomes would lead to a fall in transaction demand. This reduces M_d to a lower level of M_{d1} . This in turn causes r to fall from r_0 to r_1 , a new, lower level of equilibrium r .

Algebraically this can be expressed as:

Y	transactions demand	M_d	M_{d1}	r	r_1
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Flexibility of r , Full Employment Output, Keynesian

Keynesian theory disagrees with Classical theory concerning full employment output in several ways. Firstly, Keynesian theory states that it is possible to have equilibrium at less than full-employment output because of inadequate demand. Secondly, Keynesian theory does not believe that Say's Law, as understood by the classical economists, was an adequate expression of the factors underlying the macro economy. Keynesian theory believes that supply doesn't create its own demand, rather supply responds to changes in demand. Keynesian theory believed that interest rates and prices-wages were not flexible downwards when an economy was in a recession or depression. This absence of interest rate and price-wage flexibility would prevent an economy that is in a recession from returning to full employment output.

Classical economists assumed that perfectly flexible prices and wages assured full employment. Keynesian theory view that wages and prices were "sticky" downward and were not flexible enough to prevent reestablishment of equilibrium at full employment. Keynesian theory

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couldn't really explain why prices and wages were sticky downwards-using economic theory but simply observed that price deflation simply didn't occur. One reason often cited for price stickiness is that wages are sticky. Workers are unwilling to work for lower wages or wage contracts (e.g., union contracts) prevent wages from declining.

Keynesian theory advocates fiscal policy activism to stimulate the economy and to reduce unemployment. Fiscal policy includes changes in government spending or taxes. To reduce unemployment, Keynes argued for cuts in taxes and/or increases in government spending (budget deficits) to stimulate aggregate demand. In Keynes's view, the opposite policies (budget surpluses) were the key to curing inflation problems. This is in contrast the classical theory that suggests interest rate and price-wage flexibility would cure any economic problems and that government should not get involved in manipulating the economy.

Conclusion

Classical theory assumes that the real rate of interest, r , is determined by real factors: thrift (saving) and productivity (investment). Through simple algebraic manipulation, it can be seen that in a macro economy, savings = investment. The equilibrium r is determined when $S = I$.

Classical theory believes that at the level of $S = I$, the economy is at full employment output. When there is a state of dis-equilibrium, when $S \neq I$, flexible interest rates, prices and wages adjust, to ensure that Say's Law holds and full employment output is maintained.

Keynesian theory assumes that r is determined by monetary factors: money supply, M_s , and money demand, M_d . It is assumed that M_s is fixed through the Central bank. M_d , comprising of transactions, precautionary and speculative demands for money, has a negative relationship with r , which can be expressed as :

Keynesian theory doesn't believe in Say's Law. It argues instead that there can be voluntary unemployment in the economy. They assume an absence of interest rate, price and wage flexibility, arguing instead for active fiscal policy, with government cutting taxes and increasing taxes to stimulate economic growth and reduce unemployment.

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Assignment 2: Task 1

Original Essay: Interest Rate Determinants

New Genre: A radio debate, with dialogue.

Debate between Milton Freedman (Classical economist) and J.M. Keynes (Keynesian economist). Set on BBC Radio 4, White City, London, August 20th 2001.

Characters: Phyllis Crème (PC): Host
Milton Freedman (MF): Classical economist
J.M. Keynes (JMK): Keynesian economist
Mohammed Bashir (MB): Caller
Mike Need (MN): Caller
Kathy Stokes (KS): caller

PC: Welcome to tonight's special edition of Debate Time. I'm your host, PC. One of the key aspects of our British economy is the rate of interest (r). The rate of interest is the rate of return promised by a borrower of capital to a lender of capital. The term is used everyday by politicians and economists, but how many ordinary people off the street would know what r really is? Our first speaker, from Chicago USA, is a prominent Classical economist. He is a loving father and a good friend of the US President. It is my honour to present to you MF.

(Shakes hands with MF. Takes a moment)

Our second distinguished speaker is from South East London. Famous for his uncompromising manner, his works include 'The general Theory of Employment, Interest and Money', 1936. He is a leading economist, founder of the Keynesian school of economic thought. I present to you JMK.

(JMK shakes hands with PC, MF)

Well gentlemen, it's wonderful to have two such prominent economists with us tonight. I hope that you can offer an insight to our audience into r . I'm sure that you both know how our debates work over here? To remind our listeners, MF and JMK will have exactly three minutes to put their view across to our listeners, before I move onto the next speaker. I would love for you both to talk with us for longer, but we have to have time for a few questions from our listeners as well. If I could ask MF to start off tonight's debate, followed by JMK, and hopefully we will be at the end of part one of the show.

(Looks at both MF, JMK)

One last thing. I don't know if you two have heard this programme before, but these debates can get quite heated, so, let's keep it as a fair fight?

(MF, JMK both laugh)

JMK: (laughing) O.K., PC, I'll try my best!

MF: Thanks PC for having me on your show tonight. It's a great honour and I hope that I can be of some use to our listeners tonight. Since my time is short, I'll try to keep to the main points, and hopefully, that will be enough to get the listeners thinking about r and how important it really is.

Firstly, let me introduce myself. My name is MF and I'm part of the Classical school of economic thought. The foundation of this school was laid out by whom I would call the 'father' of modern economic theory, Adam Smith. His book 'The Wealth of Nations', 1776, is the book that ignited my passion for economics, and, over two hundred years since its publication, the book is still widely used and respected.

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The rate of interest is a commonly used term and its basic definition is the rate of interest r is the rate of return promised by a borrower of capital to a lender of capital. However, there is much more to r than simply its definition. How is r determined? What level of r is best for you and me? How do changes in r affect us? These are the key questions concerning r . Firstly, r is determined by thrift and productivity. In simple terms, thrift is savings by consumers and productivity refers to investments in capital by businesses and government. In simple economic terms, savings is defined as income that is not spent on consumption. Investment is the amount of income/output that goes towards capital equipment.

To summarise the relationship between savings and investments and r , it can be said that savings is a positive function of r , whereas investment is seen as a negative function of r . This means that as r goes up, savings goes up as well and investment goes down.

I have outlined the determining factors of r , but what is the best, the equilibrium, level of r ? Well, r is at its equilibrium level when the amount of savings in the economy is equal to the amount of investments in the economy.

PC: I'm sorry, MF, but you've run out of time. Thank you for that brief insight into r . Now, ladies and gentlemen, I present to you our second guest speaker, JMK.

(JMK and PC shake hands)

Your time starts now!

JMK: Thanks PC. I would also like to thank MF for his contribution to tonight's debate. However, I disagree with MF on r . His classical view believes that saving is a function of r . However, savings is the difference between income and consumption, and with consumption being a function of income, savings is also a function of income, not r . On investments, I also differ in opinion with MF. He believes that investment is also a function of r . I don't but this. I'll give you an example. His Classical view believes that when the economy is in a recession, that r would decline, causing savings to decline and investments to increase, thus stimulating the economy. But, tell me, when in a recession when demand has fallen, why would firms invest in new production equipment when its existing equipment is being under utilised? It just doesn't make sense!

My alternative theory, and also more acceptable theory,

MF: Acceptable? By who?

(MF jumps up)

JMK: By the majority!

(JMK looks sharply at MF)

PC: O.K. chaps, can we let JMK finish his presentation. You can debate your differences during the question and answer session with our listeners in part two of tonight's show.

JMK: As I was saying, an alternative theory (MF smiles) is that r is determined by money demand and money supply. In the UK, the Bank of England controls the money supply; therefore, it is assumed that money supply is fixed in the short-run. People hold money for three reasons, transactions, and precautionary and speculative motives. Since time is short, I'll summarise money demand by saying that as r goes down, money demand goes up. Thus, the equilibrium level of r is achieved when money supply is equal to money demand in the economy.

PC: But your three minutes is up. Again, I'd like to thank our two special speakers tonight, MF and JMK. They both proved to be very resourceful in their three minutes and I hope that they have provided our listeners with a valuable insight into the r . MF, who believes that r is determined by savings and investments and JMK, who believes that r is achieved when money supply is equal to money demand.

Well, I think that our guests have earned themselves a short break. So, at the end of part one of 'Debate Time', with me your host Phyllis Crème, here's a quick word from our sponsors, (put rail company name), and remember, 'trains are better late than never.'

(Show goes off-air. PC, MF, JMK remove their headphones. Adverts play on-air.)

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So, what do you think of the show so far?

JMK: I must admit, I was nervous at first, but it all happened so quickly. The talk went through just like that.

MF: So, JMK, you're still stuck up with your views about r , heh? What was it that you said, 'more acceptable view?' What was all that about???

JMK: You know very well. Your allegiance to Classical economics, that schools is as good as dead. After you couldn't explain the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, I would have thought that you would have given up that sinking ship by now!

MF: What, and your Keynesian theories could explain the Great Depression?

PC: Listen, this isn't the time or the place for this.

(PC points at clock, then headphones)

(All put on headphones)

And welcome back to 'Debate Time'. The first part of our show saw our guests MF and JMK taking turns in our 'three minute debate', with both guests putting across their views on the r .

Now, it's that part of the show where our listeners have the chance to phone in to ask our guests their questions. So, let's get straight to our first caller, Mr. Mohammed Bashir from east London.

Mr. Bashir, your question please, and who is it for?

MB: Good evening to all. I was listening to MF earlier on, who was about to talk about how changes in r affect the people but he ran out of time. My question to MF is how does changes in r affect the public?

PC: O.K. thanks Mr. Bashir. I'm sure that MF is eager to answer your question, so over to you.

(PC points at MF)

MF: Thanks for that question. How do changes in r affect us? Well, the key concept here is flexibility. Flexibility of r allows the economy to maintain full employment. This concept is called Say's Law. As I said earlier, r is in equilibrium when savings is equal to investments. But, take for example, the prospect for war. It would have a negative effect on the economy and it would contribute to it going into recession. People's incomes would decline; they would spend less money and save more. Businesses would invest less. These factors combined would result in savings being greater than investments in the economy, upsetting the equilibrium level of r , where savings is equal to investments. This would mean that moves up to a higher level, thus causing unemployment. So how do we regain our original equilibrium at savings is equal to investments? Flexibility of r is the key. By making r lower, it would be a dis-incentive to save, thus savings fall. Investments would be more attractive to businesses, so investments would increase. These changes would offset the initial increase in savings and decrease in investments, leading to the point where savings would equal investments. We would have a new level of r , with less consumption and more investment. We would also regain full employment.

PC: Well, I hope that answered your question, Mr. Bashir. Our second caller is a Mr. Mike Need from Birmingham.

Mr. Need, your question please.

MN: (Heavy Birmingham accent) Thanks. You just talked about flexible interest rates being able to get us out of a recession. My question to MF is, if in a recession and investments and savings do not respond through flexible interest rates, then what?

MF: I'm glad that you asked that question. If flexible interest rates do not stimulate the economy, then the flexibility of prices and wages would allow the economy to return to full employment. Listen.

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With a reduction in Aggregate Demand, prices would fall. This fall in prices means that our money that we hold has greater purchasing power. Since items are cheaper we can buy more. This would lead to greater spending, Aggregate Demand returns to its original level and the economy has full employment again.

PC: Thank you MF. It's time for our final caller of what has been a fascinating debate.

(Pauses)

Mrs. Stokes from Southampton, your question please.

KS: Hello. I must admit, I'm not one who knows too much about the workings of our economy, so I'm glad that I tuned in tonight. Well, one thing that I have noticed tonight is the difference in views between MF and JMK. I was wondering if JMK could tell me why he doesn't agree with MF on r , and what he believes changes in r will result in.

JMK: Thank you for the question. I disagree with MF and his Classical view that there is constant adjustment to full employment in the economy. Firstly, it is possible to have equilibrium at less than full employment because of inadequate demand. I also do not believe that r , prices and wages are flexible downward when the economy is in a recession. With an absence of flexibility in these three factors simply means that an economy in a recession cannot return to full employment. You could say that prices and wages are 'sticky' downward when in a recession. How are wages 'sticky' you might ask? I'll give you an example. Workers are unwilling to work for lower wages or wage contracts, e.g. union contracts, to prevent wages from declining.

So far, I have just refuted the Classical theories about stimulating an economy in recession. So how does a government get out a recession and reduce unemployment? Well, this job lies with the government itself. It has to get actively involved to pull it out of recession. This is done by cutting taxes and increasing government spending, to stimulate aggregate demand.

PC: I'm going to have to stop you right there, JMK. We've come to the end of tonight's debate. I'd like to thank tonight's distinguished guests, MF and JMK, and would like to welcome them back again in the near future.

MF: It's been a pleasure to have come and participate in with you PC and JMK. Thank you.

JMK: Yes, thank you. I also hope to be back soon.

PC: Thanks guys. Now, for a final word from our sponsor (rail), 'your trains are better late than never'.

Good night.

(End of transmission)

19/11/01

Discuss some of the different methods of classifying political systems, with their advantages and disadvantages

If the cross-national study of politics is seen as fundamental to the development and scrutiny of political hypotheses then it is a necessity to create models of classification for political systems. "For most sciences, experimentation is the way to test theory, but for political science, comparison is the principal method."¹ The classification of political systems is a necessary evil in order to provide a framework for comparative political study. It is a necessary *evil* because any form of classification is inherently based on a form of generalisation and hence does not definitively reflect the political (or indeed social or economic) reality. Therefore, any analysis of methods of classification is essentially a struggle between the divergent forces of simplicity and realism. When examining the various models of classification, it is important to stress that neither complexity nor generalisation are ideals to strive for and that the most effective form of classification will provide a satisfactory trade-off between the two concepts. It is also important to bear in mind that the definition of the political system must include all factors which influence decision-making, both formal (institutional) and informal (the other methods of influence exerted by political actors, usually unseen). With these two unavoidable compromises in mind, I will examine the various models that have been proposed not purely in terms of their advantages and disadvantages but also in the way they have challenged and shaped the discourse of political study.

The first political theorist to provide a model of classification of the political system was Aristotle. As Hague et al note, the primary advantage of Aristotle's model is his distinction between government that is ruled by the one, few or many which is still highly instructive² for developing categorisations of states. For instance, we can talk of the 'tyrannical' rule (such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq), where political power is concentrated in a single person, for their own interests with a monopoly of the means of coercion. So, Aristotle provides a descriptive analysis that remains relevant. However, as Ball points out, his intention was not only to "describe, but to evaluate"³ and the search for the 'ideal state' colours his classification with an ideology that is not advantageous when making modern comparisons. The best example of the fault of his distinction between 'perverted' and 'genuine' types of rule is his assertion that democracy is a perverted form of government: "The corresponding deviation [is] government by the many, democracy."⁴ Similarly, Aristotle's concern with the social standing of rulers "what differentiates oligarchy and democracy is the wealth or lack of it"⁵ is a major disadvantage in his model of categorisation. It prevents the creation of an objective model of classification that could be used to analyse political systems, which might have different historical and ideological roots. Aristotle also gives too great a focus on the political elite when analysing

¹ Peters, *The Importance of Comparison*, pp.1

² Hague Harrop and Breslin, *Comparative Government and Politics*, pp. 26

³ Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 39

⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Bk 3 Ch8 pp.116

⁵ Ibid, Bk 3 Ch 8 pp. 117

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the political system. As Sinclair points out in his introduction to *The Politics* "the privileges of citizenship were to him a matter of supreme importance"⁶ mainly because he was not a 'citizen' himself. Aristotle's concept that those who partake in the matters of state (citizens) are a class unto themselves provides an ideal model of government that is essentially exclusive, hence his assertion that "the best state will not make a worker a citizen"⁷. As Dahl shows "the ideal state either cannot change or must change for the worse. Consequently political Utopias exclude or deprecate the idea of change"⁸ The problems that I have identified with Aristotle's model are ones that centre on the conservative ideology that implicitly underlies his system of classification. For this reason, Hague et al's assertion is correct that his analysis is too "deductive, working from principles to examples."⁹ Modern classifications must be as inductive as possible "seeking to identify actual governments that share a number of common characteristics."¹⁰

Clearly influenced by Aristotle, Baron de Montesquieu's model of classification provides the most simplified model of government that is available to the student of comparative politics. He proposes the three-fold separation of types of government: "There are three species of government: republican, monarchical, and despotic."¹¹ His definition of "a republican government is that in which the body, or only a part of the people, is possessed of the supreme power;"¹² has given us a consensual definition of a republic, that in which sovereignty is executed by the people in a nation. However, the main faults in Montesquieu's model are similar to those of Aristotle in that, as Ball notes "his categorisation is firmly in the classical mould since the type of government depended on the number of people holding power"¹³. His generalisation on this basis didn't even reflect the political actuality of the time: "most contemporary governments in Western Europe existed as mixed, or impure, governments. France was an aristocracy, a state with both republican and monarchic traits."¹⁴ Nonetheless, one advantage that Montesquieu's theory provides is the realisation that political actions are not separate from other factors that influence civil society: "There is in Montesquieu the important recognition between the type of government and the type of society. Education, morals, patriotism and the level of economic equality all help to determine the type of government."¹⁵ This concept has proved critical in modern discussions of the political system and its relationship to the wider world. However "The gap between theory and reality appears in Montesquieu's works as discrepancies in historical reality, especially in his treatment of despotic government"¹⁶Montesquieu is only able to find true despotism in the East, and his sources are travel diaries and

⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics*, (Sinclair's introduction) pp.18

⁷ Aristotle, *The Politics*, Bk 3 Ch5 pp.111

⁸ Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, pp. 60

⁹ Hague et al, *Comparative Government and Politics*, pp. 26

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 26

¹¹ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, Bk2 Ch1 lns1-2

¹² Ibid, Bk2 Ch1 ln. 6

¹³ Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 40

¹⁴ Chan, *Montesquieu's Political Theory*, lns. 33-35

¹⁵ Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 40

¹⁶ Chan, *Montesquieu's Political Theory*, ln 26

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literature.¹⁷" This flaw in his system shows us that the over simplification of a categorisation model is inherently based on a distorted view of political reality. "This association of despotism with the Orient is part of the larger framework of colonization, mercantilism, and ethnocentrism within which Montesquieu theorises."¹⁸ Obviously, any theorist is influenced by the historical context within which they write, but in order to provide a more impartial method of classification it is necessary to pursue a more 'global' approach.

Criticisms that many models of classification have an implicit pro-Western ideology extend to many modern methods of classification that have been proposed, which have been summarised by Ball and Peters. Their system of classification divides modern nation-states into four categories: liberal democratic systems, communist systems, post communist systems and authoritarian systems. The main division of the world along these communist (current and former) and non-communist (liberal democratic) is not a true analysis of the situation in global politics but more a reflection of the Cold War context in which they were initially constructed.¹⁹ The 'communist political system' is not particularly helpful in the modern context because it's over-ideological focus (the first characteristic described concerns the writings of Karl Marx²⁰) combined with recent historical changes makes it a somewhat redundant typology: "Historically this category has been quite large, it persists in 1998 with *only* China, Cuba, North Korea and Laos"²¹ The 'East vs. West' ideological construct that this classification pursues is all the more problematic, when the only method of generalising the remaining countries in the world (termed 'autocracies') is as a "heterogeneous collection of all the political systems that cannot be fitted into the other three categories"²² Another major disadvantage is that the seven characteristics attributed to the definition of a liberal democratic system produce an overly rigid system of classification. There is no way in which for example the recent anti-terrorism legislation in Great Britain which infringes civil liberties (the sixth characteristic²³) could be represented as a move away from the liberal democratic system in this model. It would either have to be ignored or analysed in an increasingly complex set of sub groups²⁴ which defies Ball's notion that "[the aim of] classification...is to simplify...to allow for significant comparison".²⁵ Few political systems are static, and this method of categorisation simply does not provide a dynamic analysis to allow for historical change and ideological development

¹⁷ Chan, *Montesquieu's Political Theory*, ln 37

¹⁸ *Ibid*, ln.42

¹⁹ The first edition of the text where the author was just Alan Ball was in 1971

²⁰ Ball and Peters, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 57

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 57

²² *Ibid*, pp. 59

²³ See Ball and Peters, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 55

²⁴ such as Lijphart's differentiations between majoritarian and consensual democracies see Ball and Peters, *Modern Politics and Govt*, pp. 56

²⁵ Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, pp. 40

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Jean Blondel's model of classification provides a more fluid and objective system of analysis within the constraints of the comparative method. While Montesquieu and Aristotle were centrally concerned with the number of people who had power within the society, Blondel's classification is also concerned with the form and purpose of the political system. The importance that Blondel places on the third normative dimension - the purpose and goals of governmental decision making adds a critical element to his classification, which is crucial when analysing systems which do not fit into the liberal democratic mould. Previous models, such as the distinction between 'façade democracies' and 'quasi-democracies' focused on the way in which decisions were taken, rather than the substance of decisions. Blondel's example of a possible distinction between 'conservative' and 'progressive' authoritarian regimes, shows that political systems should also be classified by "the actions they take with respect to property, the social structure or education"²⁶ It is necessary that we include the policies of the particular system that we analyse, rather than simply analyse the actions which affect their control of society. For example, a change in government within an authoritarian regime may not effect the political structure or how 'democratic' political rule is, but policy decisions which increase access to education will have a knock-on effect in terms of political participation and must be considered important when categorising political systems. The key disadvantage of this approach is the difficulty of operationalising this 'third-dimension', as Blondel concedes. But while precise definition is not always possible, it is of great importance because "all societies can be located at some point on this [continuum]"²⁷ By using a sliding scale (see Fig 3.1 pp. 32) his model provides the fluidity to allow for the inevitable changes that affect political systems. "The determination of the positions of countries at various points in time with respect to the three dimensions of norms is...a means of understanding the dynamics of these systems on a comparative basis." By moving away from a rigid 'box-like' classification he produces a model which allows for the subtleties and nuances of the political system, whilst retaining the simplicity necessary for comparison, and crucially providing a model (see Figure 3.2 pp. 34) that might predict "the direction in which political systems are expected to go."²⁸

The fact that I have been able to expound more disadvantages than advantages while analysing the various methods of classifying political systems is not so much a fault in the models or methods themselves, but a reflection of the numerous problems associated with comparative studies. It is impossible to be completely inductive in the study of politics, as even a political scientist will begin with a hypothesis that is in some way coloured by fixed preconceptions of the way the world is, based on their ideological notions. Similarly, the measurement of the factors which classification is based upon such as how 'liberal', 'egalitarian' or 'authoritarian' a system is are extremely problematic to operationalise: the amount of quantifiable data is small or sometimes non-existent. My favouring of Blondel's methods essentially stems from a personal preconception of the importance of policy substance. In the end, the only certainty is Dahl's assertion that

²⁶ Blondel, *Comparative Government* pp. 31

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 31

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 28

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there is no one best typology: "the one we find most useful will depend on the aspects of politics in which we are most interested."²⁹

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²⁹ Dahl, *Modern Political Ideologies*, pp. 66

APPENDIX 4.5

Voice and Place - Essay 1.

How might anthropological considerations of the built environment lead to better understandings of issues such as social status, identity construction and nationalism?

Fieldwork methodology has undergone vehement inside and outside criticism over the past decades, and as a discipline, anthropology has been compelled to question and reappraise its approach. Consequently, there is an intensified concern amongst social scientists to submit rigorous, comprehensive research, by unfolding the many layers surrounding a specific aspect of culture.

Often we do not fully attend to our environments, 'we do not examine them but breathe them in' (Day 1990 : 10) – 'great monuments shout their presence and instil feelings of awe and wonder, yet a familiar environment is taken for granted' (Mike Parker Pearson and Colin Richards 1999 : 3).

An anthropological consideration of the built environment would pose a range of questions regarding how and why it was formed, what it represents and expresses and what its effects are on society.

This study will approach these questions with the intention of gleaning some elucidation as to issues of social status, identity construction and nationalism.

It will be initially concerned with the domestic and work spaces, to then reflect on the impact of architecture and urban planning within the wider environment. After examining its effects on social identity, the role of the built environment in terms of national identity construction will be considered.

Most housing, across the globe, is made by people for themselves.

Environments are thought before they are constructed (Rapoport 1980 : 298) and man builds in order to think and act (Preziosi 1983).

The 'immobile' home represents a desire to fix a centre, it is a will to grasp orientation, order and identity. Thus, the dwelling can be interpreted as an elaborate metaphor for the concept of human identities. In Dovey's words 'to be at home is to know where you are; it means to inhabit a secure centre and to be oriented in space' (1985 : 36). The home can be perceived as a microcosm for the whole world, where human statuses and the central beliefs of a culture are represented through material design. Man strives to fix a centre, a 'focus' amongst the chaos. The organisation of domestic space is a cultural process that translates systems of classification. Dichotomies such as private : public, clean : dirty, front : back have cultural variations and are conformed to accordingly, in different settings, as shows R.J Lawrence's comparative study of Australian and English domestic environments. Thus, the structuring of a home is not an unalloyed expression of 'individuality' but is 'predicted by age, gender, class, ethnicity and other aspects of social context' (Pearson and Richards 1999 : 7). In many societies the 'hearth' stands for the centre of the dwelling, its image is even used to exemplify the very concept of home and family life. Its latin root is literally 'focus', which has formed the term 'foyer' in modern French, employed to refer both to the 'hearth' but also, by extension, to the 'home' in general.

In nomadic communities it is the idea, the concept of the dwelling which persists. They may transport a few familiar and functional objects from one site to the next, but it is the actual grouping of certain individuals that stands for 'home' and order. However, 'home' for a nomad can have a physical association, it can mean a delimited area of

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land, as with the ancestral land of Australian Aboriginal groups such as the Pintupi (Myres 1986 : 54).

Many people migrate daily between their home and their place of work.

In the case of the office, the hierarchy of roles is indicated by the layout of the work areas. Where employees have their own desk they are inclined to affirm their individual presence in the communal space by creating a miniature 'shrine' of their lives (photographs, personal objects, etc.). There is a tendency in contemporary Western-style office-planning to move away from the cosy, personalised work environment to create spacious, open-plan, minimalist zones, where workers are not allocated an individual desk area but are encouraged to move around the office. Thus, the workers form less attachment to a specific space or the company of a particular colleague, which could make them complacent, distract them from their main focus and hinder their work input. As with nomadic peoples for whom the focus is on the concept of 'home', with 'office nomads' the emphasis is steered away from the metaphor, the paraphernalia, to embrace the actual concept of work. People working in this kind of environment are obliged to constantly reassert themselves, the office code thus stands for a microcosm of the wider, ever-challenging business world.

There is a will to banish the (perhaps somewhat gender-specific) stereotype of the biscuit-dunking, photo-gazing, nail-filing office-worker, in order to encourage the ethic of the diligent, dynamic, competitive and cost-effective team-player. This recourse to particular methods of interior design and colour scheming reveals a calculated understanding of the symbolism and power of space over human behaviour and identity. Our attitudes and reactions to space can indeed be considerably manipulated by the manner in which we arrange the material components of our environment. Frank Lloyd Wright achieves the reverse effect of the open-plan office trend by rendering an impersonal space an intimate place through his design of a set of dining-chairs with unusually high backs, (initially for his home-studio in Oak Park, Illinois, but then replicated elsewhere). Placed around a table situated in a large room, they create a delimited, cosy atmosphere for the diners.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Haton wrote that 'like some strange race of gastropods, people build homes out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality. But these symbolic projections react on their creators, in turn shaping the selves they are. The envelope thus created is not just a metaphor' (1981 : 138).

In a similar vein, Winston Churchill said that 'first we shape our buildings but afterwards our buildings shape us'. However, a differential contribution to architecture must be noted, with reference to gender. Although female influence over the built environment is becoming increasingly marked thanks to the multifaceted advancements of women's status in society- in the world as it is today - the traces of female identity in architecture are still minimal.

'In response to this, women endeavour to construct their own identities through investment in the material inventories of their own households, over which they have considerable practical power' (Pearson and Richards 1999).

Ursula Sharma's ethnography on women in Shimla, North India (Sharma 1986), demonstrates the importance of what she terms 'household service work', which englobes all the activities performed by women that contribute to the establishment, maintenance and even improvement of social status. Sharma perceives household service work as one of the ways in which class formation is facilitated. The term refers to a great variety of activities, an essential one being women's efforts in the realm of domestic design. Striving to create just the right impression is not the sign of an obsession with triviality and display, but rather it is a real investment in status.

Research on the isolated and isolating nature of the housewife's role in Western society concludes that this seclusion is due to the privatised manner in which housework is

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performed. The tendency for women to relieve their loneliness by switching on the television or radio rather than through human contact can be explained by the actual style of architecture found in many Western settings : the rarity of communal passages and balconies with (vis-à-vis) views(?), etc. As Sharma writes 'in most Western cities the nature of neighbourhood planning and domestic architecture mean that few women are likely to interact with each other or even to observe each other in the course of their housework' (1986 : 69).

Thus, beyond being shaped by personal dwelling places, human behaviour and identity can be further moulded by the actual location of the home within the wider environment.

In many settings across the globe great significance is accorded to the type of structure one inhabits. As Sircar's 1987 study shows, 'the ranking of 'detached', 'semi-detached', 'terrace' and 'flat' in Britain indicates the amount of space, garden area and privacy which are indicators of social position (Pearson and Richards 1999 : 8). These authors go on to write that 'the match between social classes and house types may not be absolute, but the hierarchical classification of dwellings acts as a totemic system of moral and social taxonomies for the British class structure, both exemplifying it and reinforcing it' (1999 : 8).

As the dwelling is a representation of the self, the status quo and the household as a collective entity, so is often its placement within a particular neighbourhood or landscape.

Andrew Turton's 2000 study of social identity in Thai states evokes, by its very title, the notions of 'civility' and 'savagery' with which the Thai people classify their environment. He presents two binary oppositions : those of 'tai : kha' and 'm'ang : pa'. By qualifying themselves as 'tai', the people of Thailand appropriate 'freedom-loving' values, and by contrast, attribute a servile character to the non-tai : the 'kha'. Moreover, 'm'ang', in which the Thai has historically asserted his identity, denotes the 'political domain' and social development, as opposed to the 'pa', which is derived from the latin 'silva', the forest, which connotes notions of wilderness and savagery (Turton 2000 : 6).

Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards write that 'the forest as a place of danger, or more positively as a place of refuge or purgation, was conceptually opposed to the security and order of the town and city. Yet today we invest the forest with attributes of retreat and tranquility, in opposition to the social evils and stress of the city' (1999 :4). This classification of the city as a somewhat 'evil' and 'polluting' place is detected in Constance Perin's research of North America. She suggests that the cosmic order expressed is 'of the American heaven and hell in the suburban pull towards salvation and the urban push of social pollution' (Perin 1977 : 216).

As cities have expanded due to sometimes colossal urban migration, suburbs have emerged. These areas stand for modernity, affluence and 'salvation' for it is the more wealthy amongst the urban population that have the flexibility to set up home elsewhere and travel to their place of work when the urban heart becomes overpopulated. Currently, there is a reversal of this process in Western cities occasioned by the gentrification of previously working-class areas. In London, there has been an ongoing flux of young, upwardly-mobile people moving into the capital's centre and 'inner cities', where their work and social life are within easy access. Thus, many suburban areas are now considered to be 'out in the sticks', to be somewhat backwards and removed from the advancements of civilisation.

However, in numerous urban settings across the globe the social division between the impoverished dwellers of the old city centre and the affluent suburban population still prevails.

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The population expansion that succeeded the Yemeni civil war engendered considerable changes to San'a', the capital city, and to its social hierarchy. The traditional identity networks formed around the Mosque, notions of the family unit and the enclosed neighbourhood, disappeared. Due to the rapid expansion and poorly planned modernisation of San'a', a range of problems such as inadequate drainage infrastructures, hazardous electrical installations, unmanageable vehicular traffic and the gradual deterioration of traditional Yemeni architecture have ensued (Ronald Lewcock 1985). In 1984 it was entered on the list of World Heritage Cities by the General Conference of UNESCO , and as Trevor Marchand writes 'included in the later phases of the preservation programme for San'a' was the rebuilding and repairing of the old city walls, undoubtedly the most significant symbol demarcating the boundary between the traditional and modern living environments' (Marchand 2000 : 46-47). The old city is regarded as a bastion of traditional Yemeni cultural identity, but although this can feed positive associations, there are also pejorative attributions placed upon the inhabitants, who are, to a certain extent, perceived as regressive and retrograde as they are not partaking in the dynamics of modern life. When the 'static : dynamic' dichotomy is this pronounced, people can become restricted and shaped by the identities that are projected upon them, as the stake directs and limits the growth of the plant, boundary markers of this kind can inhibit the progress of certain sections of society, which thus grow to embody the stereotype.

Another location where foreign intervention has, unwittingly, effected such social divisions is in the sacred Malian city of Djenn. The Netherlands funded the restoration of about an eighth of the city's traditional mud constructions, 'residents pay nothing for the repairs but must agree to keep their houses traditional, with small windows, modest-size rooms, and mud construction - this at a time when some people are razing whole buildings to put in electricity, plumbing and rooms big enough for armoires' (Karen E. Lange June 2001. National Geographic : 104). The old peripheral wall of Quebec city, Canada, was restored, however, in this location successful 'hybridisation' seems to have been achieved through the intermingling and symbiosis of distinct bands of cultural flow.

In the case of the Anatolian city of Istanbul, a partial preservation of its architecture with regards to the politics of ethnic nationalism can be noted. The city has a predominant Sunni Muslim Turkish population, but also hosts Kurdish, Jewish, Greek and Armenian minority communities. While funding is allocated to the restoration of traditional Muslim, Ottoman architecture, the Armenian constructions (amongst others), inhabited by the urban poor, are left to crumble.

The conservation of traditional architecture in a modern environment, whether it be monumental or domestic, can thus hold a strong political function.

Benedict Anderson writes that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined', they are imagined 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 2000 : 6). The 'imagination' of a community, the notions of 'communion' and 'fraternity', are facilitated by the colonial legacy of communication, 'census, map and museum' (Anderson 2000). Nation-building is achieved by geographical and cultural delimitation, and governments seek to express this concept in concrete form through architectural constructions.

In Lefebvre's words 'monumentality always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message...Monumental buildings mask the will to power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought' (Lefebvre 1991 : 143).

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Thus, architecture and urban design can act as national totems, and also as a 'mask', a deliberate form of lie. Moreover, as with the social identity constructions of the old-city dwellers of urban locations such as San'a', Khiba Adobe and Djenn, architecture can play a powerful role in forging national identity. Geertz claims that in order to form a national identity, the nation-state must seem 'indigenous'. Lawrence J. Vale's analysis of Capitol buildings in Papua New Guinea, Kuwait, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh 'suggests a more specific manifestation of this : the need to make selected aspects of the indigenous seem more like the nation-state', which 'can lead to discriminatory symbolism and architectural perjury' (Vale 1992 : 280). This partial emphasis, with political purpose, can be detected in the afore mentioned case of Istanbul.

Vale presents three approaches to the design of Capitol complexes : as 'beyond politics', as 'a microcosm' and as 'idealisation'. As 'a concern for microcosmic accuracy, taken to the level of iconography, would tend to deny pluralism and stress the presence of a dominant group', in heterogeneous societies 'idealisation' seems a more favourable strategy.

This approach appears to be preferable, as long as it is not manipulated in order to disguise the inequalities of a society, but employed rather to anticipate a more balanced sharing of power in the future.

Studying the actual manner in which the built environment is constructed can reveal considerable insights into cultural identity. Caroline Humphrey suggests that 'anthropologists need to know the physical principles involved in order to understand the indigenous concepts which have solved a problem of construction in a particular way. This would enable them to get at the values which dwellings embody' (Humphrey, February 1988, *Anthropology Today* : 17).

Trevor Marchand's research on the processes involved in traditional minaret building in San'a' brings to light a parallelism between their 'architectural' approach and their belief system, as it echoes the different stages in the Islamic faith. All these factors can be included in contemporary monumental constructions, which can be the synthesis of the past and the present, with references to traditional vernacular architecture and culture as well as any 'outside' influences that may have been diffused in the course of history.

As with Quebec City, which as a 'whole', represents a successful coexistence and symbiosis of old and new, Vale writes that 'only if the traditional architecture of a given country's component cultures (cultures that have always been open to outside influence) is abstracted and combined into new and inventive hybrids can that architecture, often wonderful in itself, also play an active and progressive role in the modern world' (Vale 1992 - 284).

If the built environment acts as both metaphor and forger of cultural identity, it must embody the historical heritage as well as the complexity and evolutions of modern pluralistic societies.

Thus, whether it is in the context of the dwelling place, the work space or the monumental construction, an anthropological study of architecture and urban planning can provide important insights regarding its 'cause and effect' relationship with issues such as social status, identity construction and nationalism.

In addition to these considerations, as Humphrey suggests, an anthropological analysis of the built environment could significantly inform our comprehension of the natural environment . It 'could make an important contribution to the understanding of the dwelling as a process. Buildings do not just sit in climates, but modify them, e.g. in hot regions by grilles and verandas which disperse light and reduce glare, use of plants and carefully calculated shadow to diminish radiant effects of stone walls, or wind scoops to conduct breezes from the upper air down into the dwelling'. Furthermore, she advocates

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a greater application of anthropological data, in particular in the context of international intervention in crisis situations. As an example of ill-informed, inappropriate aid, she states the “‘disaster housing’ built after the Gediz earthquake in Turkey - either unoccupied, or requiring for cultural acceptability as much work as building a new house’ (Humphrey, February 1988, *Anthropology Today* : 16-17).

Thus, it seems that anthropology has much to contribute to a better understanding of society in general, but it must further strive to develop better means of applying this knowledge.

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Language, Power and Ideologies.
Assignment II [1]

Snails and Other Gastropods

[Context : Boris, a 19 year-old male snail, has just left school. Undecided about which direction to slither in next, he makes a two o'clock appointment with Mr. Austin Tatius at his local I.C.C.C Bureau (Inter-Species Cryptic Careers Counselling)].

SCENE ONE

Austin Tatius : Righty-ho! Stop hovering, child! Just sit yourself down! ...Now, I'm not one to beat about the bush, life's too short, whatto? Tell me, what do you want to be, boy?.

Boris : Me? I want to be happy, Sir...

Austin Tatius : Ah yes, young man...very nice! Let me rephrase my question : What do you plan to DO with your life? Come on!

Boris : Oh, I'd like to be a shepherd, Sir.

Austin Tatius : Impossible!...

Boris : But Sir, I have *EXPERIENCE!* I mean... I've never like handled a whole flock before, but I did some part-time sheep-sitting while I was still at school...You see my neighbour, she's a shepherdess, but she had this one sheep called Claire who didn't have much in common with the others...she preferred to be alone....So you know, to help my neighbour out...and Claire of course...and also for my C.V., I like offered to...

Austin Tatius : A charming tale, I'm sure...but no! Knitted cardigans and Lamb-chops no more! Do you not read the paper? You *must* keep informed, boy! Why, Agnus meum, just yesterday they eradicated the entire ovine population! Up in flames! Pyres across the land! Something not quite hunky-dory with their feet and their mouths, I believe...Tragic, most tragic...Of course if they'd asked *my* opinion I'd have...

Boris : But Sir...

Austin Tatius : Oh come, come!...You can take it! These things are character-forming! There's nothing wrong with *your* mouth from what *I* can see...you should thank your lucky stars! Now stop quivering! Stiff upper-lip, always does the trick! Forget about sheep!...The world's your *oyster!* Plenty more fish in the sea, whatto?! Besides, mark my words young man, all is not what it seems...There are many other sheep-like creatures wandering this earth....

Boris : Oh, I'd be happy with something '*sheep-like*', Sir...Something I could, you know, *relate to*...

Austin Tatius : *Relate to* ?!...What rot! Pure schmalz!...The downfall of your generation, I fear...But very well, I'll bear it in mind...Now! The I.C.C.C Bureau has just devised an outstandingly innovative formula for career co-ordination - and you, dear boy, have the exclusive honour of being my 'guinea-pig', so to speak...It's really rather clever : I shall commence by posing two highly pertinent questions...My synthesis shall take into account your affinity with sheep and your gastropodan condition...and with the help of grids, charts, complex algebra and the updated I.C.C.C directory, I'm quite sure we'll find just the ticket to set you on the journey of life! I'm really rather excited! Shall we begin?!...

Boris : Errr... yes, Sir...

Austin Tatius : Splendid! That's the spirit! On-y-va! Question one : what were the client's first four utterances?. Well?!...Speak up!

Boris : Utter rinses, Sir?...Like those champ...

Austin Tatius : *Words*, dear boy! What were your first four *words*?

Boris : Er...my first four words were ;who?', 'why?', 'how?' and, er... 'what?', Sir...I...

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Austin Tatius : Mmm...extraordinary...Question two : what is the client's favourite colour?

Boris : '...'

Austin Tatius : Well?! Cat got your tongue?!

Boris : No, Sir...It's just ...I don't have a favourite colour...I, errr...like them all...

Austin Tatius : Really? You *are* an odd specimen...I'm rather partial to blue, myself...a fine, upstanding colour without a doubt...Now! *Retournons á nos moutons!*, as they say in that most exquisite of human idioms...[aparte : Alas, I fear my wit falls upon deaf ears...]. Let's recapitulate : like myself, you are a gastropod, you carry your home on your back. I don't think it wise, at this stage, at your *tender age*, to undergo too severe a culture shock, so I will endeavour to allocate a setting where similar domestic principles are ascribed to...Let me see...You are well disposed to creatures of the gregarious inclination...You do not appear to be very discriminating with regards to coloration, however, your infantile vocalisations reveal you to be of a curious nature, and I understand this, dear boy, in every sense of the term! I feel you have not fully developed your *penchant* for probing, but you show great potential, and we at the I.C.C.C. Bureau always advise our clients, as a first step towards a fulfilling future, to *maximise their assets* .

Boris: Uh-hu...

Austin Tatius: Well! Although I say it myself, this is all coming together very nicely! The boys at the Bureau will be most delighted!...If you'd care to take a breath of fresh air, dear boy, or a light snack in the cafeteria perhaps? - I will apply my findings to *stage three* of this first-rate formula...Fifteen minutes should suffice!

Boris : Yes Sir, thank you...I'll, errr... be off then...

Austin Tatius (ruffling through his paperwork) : Yes, yes! I'll see you shortly!

SCENE TWO

[15 minutes have elapsed. A knock on the door, Boris enters gingerly].

Austin Tatius : Welcome back my young friend!...Now, make yourself comfortable...That's right...

Boris : Did you find anything for me, Sir?

Austin Tatius : Of course! Of course! The I.C.C.C. Bureau never fails its clients! But this time I really feel we have surpassed ourselves! I do believe I've managed to track down the ideal work experience for you....Now! Here's the science : I initially concerned myself with locating an appropriate environment, where your gastropodan nature would blend in. I came across an entry in the I.C.C.C directory by a couple of chaps who go by the the most inarticulable names of Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Haton, and it reads like this : 'like some strange race of gastropods people build houses out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality'¹² ...they were referring to humans, dear boy, so I think it most fitting that it should be amongst humankind that you start your career. In addition to transporting their houses on their backs, they also exhibit flock-like behaviour - they even regard *gregariousness* as a laudable quality - so I'm positive you will be quite content living amongst them. Those two gentlemen went on to say : 'But these symbolic projections react on their creators, in turn shaping the selves they are. The envelope thus created is not just a metaphor'...

Boris : Urrrr...I don't understand,Sir...

Austin Tatius : Quite, quite! Well those are the kinds of issues the A.A have been scratching their heads over for years...and when I realised these two fellows were members of that very club, well!...It all just seemed to slot beautifully into place!

¹ Czikscentmihalyi and Rochberg-Haton,. 1981 : 138

² Czikscentmihalyi and Rochberg-Haton,. 1981 : 138

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Boris : How, Sir?!...

Austin Tautius : Your first utterances, boy! Why, they are at the very crux of the A.A's *raison-d'être*!

Boris : Oh...Sir...What's the A.A?...

Austin Tautius : Ah, yes!...Well, you see, there is a club of humans called the A.A -Anthropologists Anonymous that is - and they've been schlepping around the world for a number of years, asking all those questions that you articulated as a mere infant...However, some people weren't too chuffed about the way they were doing things - some even said they should *lay off* anthropology and fieldwork *altogether*, give it up! -which made them very sad because they believe it can really help to understand their world. Presently, they are looking to recruit someone with a different approach, someone *fresh*, someone who will be more...*objective* ...,although there is some disagreement about the latter...Well! I suppose you could try, at any rate! And I should imagine your indiscriminatory stance with regards to the infinite world of *colours* would stand you in good stead...All in all, I think that you, dear boy, would make the *perfect* candidate!

Boris : I...Do you really think I could do it, Sir?...I mean, I've never...

Austin Tautius : Of course you can! Rise to the challenge, my boy! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose³! And I think I've come across just the right research topic for you...although I cannot disclose its exact nature at present – I'm sure you'll understand that, like any club, the A.A has its rules and regulations to abide by...Anyway, there is a division of the A.A at a place called S.O.A.S(Save Our Anthropologists' Souls)⁴⁵ in London,U.K - and that is where I'll be sending you to collect your assignment! I do hope this is all agreeable with you as I've taken the liberty of contacting some of the members on your behalf, and I managed to yield an unconditional offer for you! What do you say to that?...

Boris : Well, Sir...I liked the bit about me having brains in my head and err...feet in my shoes...but I'm a bit confused by all those akra...akro-whatsits...

Austin Tautius : Acronyms? Ah! The world's full of them, boy! A nifty way of keeping things exclusive, but you'll soon get the hang of it! Deconstruction is the key! It'll open many a door lining your anthropological path...That is all you need to remember! ...Now! My secretary Germaine will go through the procedures with you and make all the necessary arrangements, she'll give you a few handouts too, and we should have you London-bound in no time at all! You must be excited! ...S.O.A.S will fix a deadline, you should come back here to write up your research,then send it off ... after which you should return to my office and we'll take things from there...I wish you all the best, my young friend! I am sure you will find it a highly enriching experience, and I look forward to hearing all about it from the horse's mouth,when we meet again! Now, look after yourself, my young friend, try not to let your spirits get dampened..., I believe it can happen to the best of us in such a pluvial setting...

Boris : Yeah...Grey-arse London!...

Austyn Tautius : Mmm...Quite...Although I think it unwise to allow yourself such outbursts...Anyhow, be off, boy! Break a leg and all that!

Boris : Urrr...yeah...Goodbye, Sir! Thanks for...errr...Goodbye...

SCENE THREE

[Three days later, Boris is sitting on the steps outside the S.O.A.S building. He has just collected his assignment : HOW MIGHT AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT LEAD TO BETTER UNDERSTANDINGS OF ISSUES SUCH AS SOCIAL STATUS, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND NATIONALISM?

Bewildered, he scratches his head, as that is the only thing he can recall Mr. Austin Tautius telling him about *anthropological considerations*...When the chosen scratch-patch is quite sore, not knowing what to do with himself - or his project- he decides to take himself off on a little exploration of the city. After aimlessly meandering through London's West End, he arrives at Regents Park, where he rests on a bench.

³ Dr. Seuss. 1990 *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, London : Collins

⁴ All names are fictional, any resemblance to existing institutions is entirely coincidental.

⁵ 'Hazey Jane' – Nick Drake

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There is a young woman on the other end, bent double by the weight of her house. He can feel her looking at him out of the corner of her eye. Boris starts to feel self-conscious about the diminutive size of his shell. To mask his unease, he clumsily attempts to engage in conversation.]

Boris (to the young woman) : That's a big place you've got there! You must be proud to have so much! - (in petto) : Durr! Why do I always have to come up with such crap?!

Young woman : *So much* ? I don't have anything, mate. They took it all...

Boris : Who took it? Who took what?...

Young woman : Oh god! I don't know how many times I've told this story...Here we go : I got burgled a few days ago. The b*****s took *everything*, everything went out the window...So here I am, minus everything about me, minus all the books and all the records of my lifetime.. My home is just a...*shell*...er, sorry, I mean, no offence of course...

Boris : Yeah...okay...I mean, I'm sorry about what happened...Umm, what's your name?

Young woman : I'm Holly, and you?

Boris : My name's Boris...tell me some more about your shell...

Holly : Well, yeah...my home's a shell...it's been, like, *gutted*... Actually, *I'm* a shell, I feel like my insides have been scraped out. I had everything just the way I wanted it, you know, I felt so safe, so at *home*. I hate this expression, yeah, cause it denotes such an *egocentric* conception of the universe, but anyway, for want of a better one : *it was soooo ME*. D'you know what I mean? And now that's gone...and -I don't mean to sound melodramatic- but my *identity* went with it... They messed the house up so badly...*I'm* such a mess. I've lost my *centre*, you know...I'm like, *lost*...I don't really know where to go, so I sit in the park with the whinos and, er...snails...It's such an invasion!...All my notions of *public* : *private* have got mixed up...Imagine if this happened to you, Boris...if someone ripped off your shell and stamped on it..Hey!! Why are you taking notes, man?!...you weirdo-park-prowling-freak-boy!

Boris : Errr...well, I've got to do a study on *humans* and the built environment, for the A.A...So I need to take *fieldnotes*...

Holly : Oh yeah?...

Boris : Yeah...and what you've been telling me seems pretty relevant...but I've got to try and be *objective*, so, you know, about my shell...don't like, ask me to *subjectify*, ok?...But I can, err, *empathise* !

Holly : oh cheers...

Boris : What's all this about being lost, though...? *Centres*, and all that?...your, err...*notions*...?

Holly : Well, you know, to be at home is to know where you are; it means to inhabit a secure centre and to be oriented in space⁶. If you take the home away - your reference point - you feel lost, you know, and *exposed, nude*...you put so much of yourself into your home, people build homes out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality⁷

Boris : Oh yeah...I think I've heard about that before...but what about those *notions*...?

Holly : You really do need *everything* to be explained to you, don't you?...Ok, my home was my *canvas*, yeah...my *arena* for self-expression...but everyone knows that we're *culturally determined*, so, like, I'm under no illusions, yeah, my way of organising my space and its components pretty much cohered with everyone else's on this Island, and differed from people's ways in other cultures, or from other backgrounds, or other age-groups...get the picture?...I mean, we classify things in terms of public : private, clean : dirty, and on and on...and that's all adhered to...*represented* through people's domestic environments...you know...

⁶ Dovey. 1985 : 36

⁷ Cziksentsmihalyi and Rochberg-Haton,. 1981 : 138

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Boris : Err...Yeah...But Holly...all this about losing your *identity*, ...I mean, I've just met you and I don't think you're *empty*, or lacking in *personality*...you're *alright*, man... You still seem to be able to be *yourself*...maybe you don't need that house as much as you think you do...

Holly : Yeah, well I'm *adjusting*, man...*reappraising*, you know...

Boris : And if you don't know what do...I'm in the same boat, you could come with me and help me with my project...and you could stay in my hotel till you decide where you want to go...as an in between stage...

Holly : Yeah, betwixt and between⁸, *transition*, that's where all those public : private notions get blurred...

Boris : What?

Holly : Oh, forget about it! Let's go for a walk, yeah?

SCENE FOUR

[Holly and Boris walk down Regent's Street. Holly refrains from her usual brisk pace to accommodate her gastropodan companion. And also to cohere with her *victim status*. They stop when they come across an obstacle : a man slumped on the pavement, also bent double by the weight of his house.]

Holly : Excuse me, boss...but do you mind getting out of the way so we can pass...this is a *public* passage, you know...

Man : Yes, I do mind as a matter of fact!...Why can't you just walk around me, hey? Why does everyone think I'm in the way...I'm a member of the public too, you know... Why does everyone want to exclude me?

Holly : I was just saying...Who wants to exclude you?

Man : The b*****s at the office! They sacked me today! They told me I brought all my *baggage* to work, that it gets in the way of my duties...

Boris : But what about the other workers...don't they take *their* baggage to work?

Man : Well, no...You see, they've all sold up...everything's tied up with the job, they've invested *everything* to build up the office building, so they're pretty much all living under it now...But I wanted to keep things separate, you know, keep my old place...I mean, sure, it's a little derelict, it needs some repairs here and there, and probably a good clean too...but it's my *personal* space, you know, it's got character, *history*, it's my roots...

Boris : Like your *identity*, Sir...?

Man : *Michael*, call me Michael...

Holly : And I'm Holly, and my friend's called Boris.

Michael : Well, pleased to meet you both...

Boris : Yeah...So what did they say to you exactly, *Michael*?

Michael : Well, the *baggage* thing... they said it was weighing everyone down, that it was slowing *me* down...that I had too much *clutter*, that my saucepans make too much clatter when I move about...They said my house was unkempt, one even said my kitchen was a health-hazard! Oh, and that this reflects my state of mind...They said I stick out ...I don't fit in, I don't reflect the company's image...That I'm not contributing as much as the others...

Boris : What do they mean?

⁸ Turner

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Michael : Well, this whole thing about making the office building higher and higher...by encouraging people to place *everything* under it. But one day, it'll be so high, it'll topple over - and then what will they have?...Where will they go? At least I'll have my little den, I'll have somewhere to go back to, do you know what I mean?

Boris : Well, that's what you've got now, isn't it?

Holly : Yeah... but *I'm* beginning to think this *home* thing *does* get in the way...Not in the sense your employers meant, though...I got burgled a few days ago...but you know, I'm starting to feel lighter...freer almost! Like maybe it was *baggage* after all, a *burden*...I'm starting to like this *hotel* idea...

Michael : Ah, but you're young! You're not fully shaped yet! You are still *defining* yourself...people build homes out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality⁹...

Holly : Yeah, I know!

Boris (in petto) : This is a bit repetetive...we're going round in circles! They really do need to find a *centre...a focus...*

Michael : Well, let me finish! Obviously the young are affected by this process - 'you are not an empire within an empire'¹⁰ - but it all builds up with time, you see, everything gets more *deeply* entrenched...As the years pass by 'these symbolic projections react on their creators, in turn shaping the selves they are'¹¹. The envelope thus created is not just a metaphor' ...I designed *it*, but now *it designs me*...we have *merged*, we are indissociable, *interdependant*...As Winston Churchill simply put it, 'first we shape our buildings but afterwards our buildings shape us' ...

Holly : Umm...well *I* think I'm too young to get stuck in my ways...Boris! Can you help me get this thing off?!

Boris : Err...yeah...I guess...Are you sure you want to do this Holly?!...What about all that stuff you said in the park?

Holly : Yeah...well I've *changed my mind* ! A woman's - and the *youth's* - prerogative! That was all park-bench patter! .Come on! Before I change my mind again! We could do you afterwards, Boris! Don't you feel like coming out of your shell?

Boris : No, man! Then I'd be, like,... a *slug* ! And slugs suck!

Holly : That's not very P.C!...

Boris : *P.C??*

Holly : Oh, you need to *lighten* up, mate! Off with the shell!...Well,... you think about it!

Boris : Yeah, yeah...Let's deconstruct *you* first...

[Boris tackles Holly's house, he struggles with all his snailish might... Michael assists with the last tug-of-war to free Holly. When they finally wrench it off , gravity intervenes, and they all fall about in the road, from the force of their effort...]

Michael : Well! We'd better get up out of the way of this *vehicular* traffic!

Holly (stretching, bending, pirouetting...) : Yeah, or we'll all end up in that other *transitory* place - NHS style!

Boris (in petto) : *More acronyms!*

(to the others) : Can someone tell me what NHS means, *please?*

⁹ Cziksenti-mihalayi and Rochberg-Haton,. 1981 : 138

¹⁰ Spinoza

¹¹ Cziksenti-mihalayi and Rochberg-Haton,. 1981 : 138

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Holly : Where have you *been*, boy? NHS means *National Health Service*...You know, *Doctors and Nurses*, never played? Hospitals, E.R...oh, I guess that would just confuse you *even more*...but you get the gist, yeah?

Boris : Yeah...*ish*...but I don't understand *National*...

Michael : Well! We *are* covering a lot of ground! How about talking all this through, over a nice cup of tea, hey? I know a good place just down the road..

Boris and Holly : Deal.

SCENE FIVE

[They all file into the *Someplace Else Café*. It is lunchtime and very crowded, so they ask a woman sitting on her own if they may share the table with her, she acquiesces. They order a large pot of tea.]

Boris : So what's the *National* thing?

Holly : You're so persistent! But I kind of like that...

Boris : It's my *job*, Holly!

Michael : That word's taboo from now on, son!

Boris : *Taboo*?

Holly : You know...that whole *classification* business, clean : polluting, remember? Anyway, Nations...just like everyone has a personal identity, they also have a *social* identity and, I guess, a *national* identity too...

Boris : And how d'you get one of those? I mean, a *social* identity and a *national* identity?...I still don't know what *Nation* means...

Holly : Urr...well, I'm not sure how you get a *national* identity...

Michael : Well! First things first! Don't try to run before you can walk! Think about *social* identity...How are our social identities constructed? You've just got to observe what goes on in the course of a day...Everyone migrates between A and B, or in the capital – we're ambitious - and we go from A to Z...Great flocks of them! They all carry a replica of their home on their back, going about their business - and at Five o'clock sharp - the Mayor blows his whistle! Everyone must leg it back to their neck of the woods, take up position, and slot back to form their respective family units...And of course, some don't make it back in time, or *at all* ! And those workers that do...well, if they've put all their eggs in one basket, they can't avoid taking it back 'home' with them, which always encumbers a harmonious domestic life - egg on ye face, all round!

Holly : Yeah, everyone's got a social position...you're like, *socially determined* by the kind of house you can afford to live in...and the neighbourhood... 'the ranking of 'detached', 'semi-detached', 'terrace' and 'flat' in Britain indicates the amount of space, garden area and privacy, which are all indicators of social position'¹² ...

Michael : Indeed!... 'the match between social classes and house types may not be absolute, but the hierarchical classifications of dwellings acts as a totemic system of moral and social taxonomies for the British class structure, both exemplifying it and reinforcing it'¹³ ...Is it becoming any clearer, Boris?

Boris : Well, yeah...a bit...but the *class* thing...can't people change that? How are classes formed...how do people get *positioned*?

¹² Sircar. 1987. Quoted from Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin. 1999 : 8

¹³ Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin. 1999 : 8. *Architecture and Order. Approaches to Social Space*, London : Routledge and Keagan Ltd.

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[At this, the woman they are sharing the table with lifts her melancholic glance from the depths of her mug of tea, and directs a steady but weary look at Boris. Hitherto silent, she suddenly interjects.]

Woman : 'Household Service Work'¹⁴, pet! That's the way to climb the ladder! My name's Sudipta, by the way...

[The snail and his two informants all introduce themselves.]

Sudipta : Well, it must be said that it's more effective in my home town ...but it's still worth doing it here...

Boris : Where's your home town, Ma'am?

Sudipta : Shimla, in the hills near the Mighty Hima-laya, my dear...In Himachal Pradesh, India !... It's a migrant town, you see, recently expanded, so society is more *mobile* than in other parts...everyone's establishing themselves, you know...

Holly : But what's *Household Service Work*?

Sudipta : Ah! So many things, *beti* ! A woman's work is never done!

Michael : Do you mean housework? Cooking and cleaning?...

Sudipta : Oh yes, partly, Michael, but not just this one! So many things I tell you! It's all the ways in which women contribute to the establishment, maintenance and even *improvement* of the social status of their household - as a collective entity, you know...

Holly : Yeah, cause with the rest of the built environment, although things are changing, *allegedly*,... there's still an unequal distribution of power....I mean the traces of female identity in architecture are still so minimal...

Michael : That's true...and I suppose 'in response to this, women endeavour to construct their own identities through investment in the material inventories of their own households, over which they have considerable practical power'¹⁵ ...

Sudipta : Yes, Michael! We have power! But your view is so reductionist! We can form an identity, elevate our social status - not just our own, but that of our family too... Household Service Work is not all *tangible*, visible to the naked eye...So many things! It is one of the ways in which class formation is facilitated...and to facilitate your understanding, I'll tell you some of the *pragmatic* ways in which I go about it : I keep my house *so* clean, my tabletops *so* spotless, you could eat your *dal* off them, Michael *saab*, or your Shepherd's Pie...I take such care, I have such an eye for detail, I know how to make just the right impression, how to promote myself through material design...It's not an obsession with triviality, you see, with superficial *display* : it's a real *investment* in social status¹⁶!

Boris : Wow! And it works, yeah? Are you - and your family - like, *at the peak*, Ma'am?

Sudipta : Oh, little snail...I don't have a family, sadly, sadly...I would love to have had a daughter, a *beti* of my own...

Michael : Umm...But, Sudipta...if your house is so *lovely*, why do you come to *Someplace Else* to drink your tea? I've seen you in here before...

Sudipta : *Michael saab* ! You will make me tell everything! I persevere with my household duties... but I admit that sometimes I lose hope...I think 'What's the point in making all this effort for society when I can't be part of it anyway?'...I'm lonely, you see, so I come to *Someplace Else* to drink my tea...I like to look into my mug of chai, deep down at my reflection, it's sunny in there, it reminds me of home...and lots of people around me...

Boris : Sudipta, why can't you be part of *society*?

¹⁴ Sharma, Ursula 1986 *Women's Work, Class and the Urban Household: a Study of Shimla, North India*, London : Tavistock Publications

¹⁵ Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin. 1999

¹⁶ These theories are presented by Sharma, Ursula 1986, *Women's Work, Class and the Urban Household. A Study of Shimla, North India*, London : Tavistock publications

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Holly : Yeah, I mean, this is a *multicultural* society now...

Sudipta : Oh, it's not *that* one, *beti*...I don't mind to be here, and most people I meet, here and there, don't mind me to be here either...It's other things...I live alone, and everything is so *private*, everything about being a housewife is so isolated - so *isolating* ...Where I grew up, we had verandas, communal passages, courtyards, balconies with vis-à-vis...people chatting to each other, no need for all these enervating radio-plays and depressing chat-shows, making you want to hang yourself from the suicidal rafters!... 'in most Western cities the nature of neighbourhood planning and domestic architecture mean that few women are likely to interact with each other or even observe each other in the course of their housework' ¹⁷...

Boris : And do you think that , ermm...,that like, formed your *identity*, Ma'am?

Sudipta : Oh yes! I was a shy girl, and my mother was a very busy woman, she ran a school...but I learnt so much, so much *socialisation*, from observing my neighbour...I used to watch her hanging the washing out, I learnt that men's shirts should be hung by the collar...and the husband's undergarments should be suspended like some kind of national flag...This knowledge, I never applied, of course...but if I *had* had a husband, a family, a *beti* of my own...she would not be able to learn these things as I did, she would only have the car-park to look at, number-plates and automobile models to memorise...

Boris (in petto) : Sudipta just used that *national* word too...

Holly : It seems that, err...for you, at the end of the day, being amongst people is more important than what actual place you have in society...I mean, until very recently I thought everything about me was wrapped up in my home, but some stuff happened... and I managed to *detach* myself from it - with a little help from my friends here present - and I still know who I am! Yeah, it sounds cheesey, but I feel at home *in myself*...the rest was just superfluous, you know...Just say my name and I'll appear, in my essence, sans metaphore, isn't it?! I no longer have a designated patch to go to when the Mayor blows his whistle, but that just means that home can be *anywhere*...and I can stay in Boris' hotel till I decide where to go next...

Boris : Yeah...And in the handout I got from my careers counsellor, I read about some nomadic people, it said that it was the actual grouping of certain individuals that stood for home...and this guy, Mr Myres, wrote about a gang of Aboriginal dudes in Australia called the Pintupi, and their *concept* of home was projected onto a whole area of land...Can't you guys just, like, feel at home on Earth? Full stop.

Sudipta : Ah, but little snail, you don't solve all of societies inequalities and prejudices by doing away with buildings! Just yesterday I was on the phone to my good friend Sirikit, she's from Thailand, and she was telling me how there - and in so many other places - people classify the landscape in much the same way as they do the built environment...you know, with our *posh* and our *grotts-ville* neighbourhoods...

[Unbeknown to Boris and his three key informants, the group at the adjacent table (three men and a woman) have been listening in on their conversation. One of the men leans towards them, addressing the whole group. Boris notices they are all wearing badges with 'A.A' marked on them.]

Man : Hello there! Please forgive me, but I couldn't help overhearing you talking about Thailand, and Tai identity - I do hope you meant it without 'h' - it's more correct...You see, this is my area of expertise, I've done lots of fieldwork there over the years...Yes!...

I'm Andrew, by the way, let me introduce you to my friends : this is Constance, and these two fellows are Mike and Colin..

[Boris, Holly, Michael and Sudipta all introduce themselves, exchange handshakes, and join the tables.]

Andrew : Yes...You see, I introduced and edited a book very recently, and the very title, *Civility and Savagery*, refers to the way in which the Tai classify their environment...There are two main binary oppositions : those of the 'tai : kha', and 'müang : pa'. And you see, by qualifying themselves as 'tai', the people of Thailand appropriate 'freedom-loving' values, and by contrast, they attribute a servile character to the non-tai : the 'ka'. Furthermore, 'müang', in which the Tai has historically asserted his identity, denotes the 'political domain' and social development, as opposed to 'pa', which is from the same root as the latin 'silva' - the forest - which denotes notions of the wilderness and *savagery* : the hill-people...¹⁸

¹⁷ Sharma, Ursula, 1986 : 69

¹⁸ Turton, Andrew (ed) 2000 'Introduction' in *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*, Richmond, Surrey : Curzon Press

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Boris : Right,... so they like think that all the goodies live in towns and the wild ones lurk in the forest?...

Sudipta : Ha! Jungles!

Mike : Exactly...the forest as a place of danger, or more positively as a place of refuge or purgation, was conceptually opposed to the security and order of the town and city...¹⁹

Holly : Was?...

Colin : Yes, things have shifted somewhat, 'today we invest the forest with attributes of retreat and tranquility, in opposition to the social evils and stress of the city...'²⁰

Constance : Yes, my own research in North America yielded some interesting data concording with these contemporary classifications of the city as an *evil, polluting* place...You see, the cosmic order expressed is 'of the American heaven and hell in the suburban push towards salvation and the urban push of social pollution'²¹ ...

Holly : But, umm...*Constance*...here in London, the city centre's like, *thumpin'*..., I mean ...that's were it's at...All the über-cool are flocking into central areas, where everything's on their doorsteps, they're making grotts-ville *trendy*...And I know a whole load of people, of *all* generations, who think that if you live beyond ZoneTwo, you're like *out in the sticks*...You're perceived as *backwards*...Dinosaurs!

Michael : Well I have several acquaintances, all pretty affluent, who don't adhere to the Zone Code...I mean, they could afford to live in a penthouse flat in Covent Garden, or a Mansion flat in Mayfair if they liked, but they prefer to make their homes in the leafy suburbs...

Sudipta (in petto) : Maybe I should take out all my savings and get a mortgage somewhere like that...Perhaps there'd be more of a community spirit there...I don't know...Somewhere like *Totteridge*, apparently they have some kind of women's social networks going on there, *Tupperware parties*, *Ann Summers functions*...something I could tap in to...

Boris : These *civility : savagery* boundaries all seem a bit fuzzy to me...I mean, there don't seem to be any *clear* distinctions...

Andrew : You're quite right,...We are complex beings, we live in complex societies...our aspirations are so complex, so *diverse* ! It's difficult to theorise about social identity in a city like this one, but it's a truly stimulating subject of study! In many other parts of the world I think you'll find that the social division between the impoverished dwellers of the old city centre and the affluent, often glitzy suburban population, still prevails. I would suggest that you investigate the matter in an urban location with a *peripheral wall*...Somewhere like San'a', in Yemen, for example - take a day-trip with your friends! I have a colleague there, I'm sure he'd be delighted to show you around...I could arrange a flight on the A.A-Jet!...

[After some animated discussion, Boris, Holly, Michael and Sudipta all decide to take up Andrew's offer. Boris jots down *Trevor's* address in San'a', on the last blank page of his note-pad, now brimming with *serious* anthropological data.]

Constance : Is there something troubling you, Boris...you look preoccupied, *anxious* even...You know it's just a rumour about them eating snails in Yemen...

Boris : Oh, it's not that!...It's just, erm...I've got to find out about *Nationalism* too, and I still don't know what *Nation* means...

Constance : Ah! That's a tricky one...I'll tell you who you should contact about that - the expert in the field is a gentleman called Benedict...You can chat to him on-line on his web-site, and he can refer you to other colleagues if necessary...Give me your note-pad and I'll write down the site address...

¹⁹ Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin, 1999 : 4 *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, London, Routledge and Keegan Ltd

²⁰ Pearson, Mike Parker and Richards, Colin, 1999 : 4 *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, London, Routledge and Keegan Ltd

²¹ Perin, Constance 1977 : 216

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Boris : Yes boss...Thanks!

[Those that have addresses exchange them, they say their good-byes, and exit *Someplace Else*.]

SCENE SIX

[The research team arrives at San'a' Airport, Boris purchases a note -book with \$US.. They all pile into a crimson cab. Michael sets the external metre manually. The vexed driver snatches the scrap of paper with Trevor's address scribbled in snail-hieroglyphs, that Boris is offering him. He takes one look and a beaming grin breaks over his face. No words are exchanged as they are all too engrossed in window-gazing. The cab pulls up. Michael, Sudipta and Boris have to pay double because of their heavy baggage. They are chez Trevor. They all make their way to the front door, on which a post-it note is affixed.]

Holly (reading) : 'Out all day. Up the minaret (Central Mosque). Yell if important. Trevor'

Sudipta : Well, we'd better start filling our lungs with air then!

Boris : Yeah...There's a sign over there for the Central Mosque...shall we follow it?

[After ten minutes of wandering the streets of San'a', they arrive at their destination. They contemplate the minaret-in-progress for a while.]

Sudipta : I don't know about anyone else, but I've had my dose of neck-craning for one day... Shall we follow his instructions?

Michael : Yes, come on...

Holly : ONE, TWO, THREE!

Boris, Holly, Michael and Sudipta (in unison) : TREVOOOOOOOOOR!!!!!!

Trevor (with megaphone, from the top of the minaret) : Hey! Welcome to San'a'! Boris and Co.? Come on up! I'll meet you half way!

[Trevor booms down something in Arabic (*Modern Standard*). They are accosted by a group of apprentice builders. With much gesticulation and recourse to International Sign Language, the group manage to decode their suggestion that Sudipta and Michael should relieve themselves of their encumbersome dorsal arrangements in order to tackle the tower. Both refuse. The group start their treacherous journey up. As if in a play, or a movie, they make it halfway, without so much as a scratch or bruise... Boris thanks his lucky stars. Introductions, etc.]

Trevor : Yeah...I've been working with these guys for months...Special honour to be allowed up here! Hey! Meet Mr. Zafar, he's the Master builder...

[Handshakes, smiles... Boris gets his cheek pinched.]

Trevor : You see, unlike formally trained architects, this great man doesn't work with plans or drawings - he *conceptualises* the building *as a whole* ! I'm up here because I want to know how people know what they know...I've been researching how these traditional minaret builders, the apprentices, are *inculcated*. Unlike myself, they haven't received a formal technical or architectural training...but their apprenticeship is lengthy..during which, they learn to *embody* the implicit rules and beliefs...By performing repetitious tasks, they *embody* the reason, the knowledge...the discipline...And they sing rhythmic songs to keep the work going...²²

Boris : So you can actually learn a lot about people by studying how they construct their environment...I mean, how they actually learn to build...and the, err, physical principles involved...?

Trevor : Sure! That gives so many insights into a culture! You see, I was able to bring to light, through my research, a parallelism between their *architectural* approach and their belief system, you see, it *echoes* the

²² Trevor Marchand [Lecture at SOAS, 12/11/01, 'Anthropology and Architecture']

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different stages in the Islamic faith...But, hey! Don't you guys want to get a drink or something? I love being up here but I could do with a little refreshment...

Holly (to Boris) : Yeah, I'm starting to feel a bit freaked out by the *altitude*...Proper *vertigo*, man...like I wanna jump!

Boris : Yeah, well don't.

Trevor : Guys, before we head down, take a proper look at the city!...It's stunning! It overwhelms me every time!

Michael : It definitely is an amazing panorama...and look! The wall ! Looping right around the city centre...

Trevor : Mmm...The wall! In 1984 San'a' was entered on the list of World Heritage Cities by the General Conference of UNESCO, and 'included in the latter phases of of the preservation programme for San'a' was the rebuilding and repairing of the old city walls, undoubtedly the most significant symbol demarcating the boundary between the traditional and modern living environments²³ ...But I'll tell you more about it down there!

[Slowly but surely the group descends the half constructed minaret. They collapse in the builders tea-tent. Michael and Sudipta stop themselves from complaining about their aches and pains, so as to avoid I-told-you-so-s.]

Boris : So...err...Trevor, could you tell us a bit more about the peripheral wall and the identity construction thing...*Classification*,...*traditional* : *modern*...

Trevor : It would be my pleasure! A bit of context first, though ! You see...there was a colossal population expansion after the Yemeni civil war, which engendered some considerable changes to San'a' - to its social hierarchy. All the traditional identity networks formed around the Mosque, notions of the family unit and the enclosed neighbourhood dissappeared...The city expanded so rapidly...and it was modernised, but most of it was so poorly planned out that to this day the city dwellers are still having to deal with the shortcomings...

Sudipta : What kind of shortcomings?

Trevor : Well, take this street, for example...Look at it, completely unmanageable traffic! And then there are all the problems occasioned by inadequate drainage and disposal infrastructures ... hazardous electrical installations, and on and on...

Holly : Is that why UNESCO *intervened* ?

Trevor : Well, partly...But I think their main motivation was to preserve the traditional architecture of Yemen - the West have always defined *Great Architecture* !...Anyway, they restored the old city wall, as I said...but the thing is, in the meantime, while the modernisation of the city was causing all this chaos... and the erosion of old buildings, those that could *afford to*, escaped ...and glitzy suburbs emerged...

Michael : So the resurrection of the wall acts as a blatant, physical boundary marker separating the rich from the poor?...

Trevor : Precisely...The rich from the poor, the traditional from the modern, the advanced from the backward, the static from the dynamic...Ha! D'you want me to go on?! ...You see, of course, people want their traditional buildings to be conserved...there are confused, mixed feelings on both sides of the wall. The old city is regarded as a *bastion* of traditional Yemeni cultural identity, but although this can feed positive associations, there are also pejorative attributions placed upon the inhabitants, because, to a certain extent, they are perceived as regressive and retrograde, as they are not partaking in the *dynamics* of modern life...

Boris : And how do the old-city dwellers react then, to all this dissing? I mean, this division in the city...does it really affect how people are?

²³ Marchand, Trevor, 2000, 'Walling Old San'a': Re-evaluating the resurrection of the city walls' in *Terra 2000* Preprints, London :James and James Scinetific Publishers

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Trevor : Well...Yes, I think so...I think that boundary markers of this kind can inhibit the progress of certain sections of society...People can become restricted - *moulded* - by the identities we project onto them...and, in this way, they may grow to embody the stereotype...

Sudipta : Like a plant...if you place a stake by it, it will affect its growth, it'll *shape* its growth, by guiding and restricting it...

Boris : So the wall works in the same way, defining...*forging* social identities?...

Trevor : Yes, I mean , it's great that there is funding to preserve these old buildings...but if a place gets museumised, no-one wants to live there...That's what happened in Khiba Adobe, and many other places across the world. I think it's important to keep cities as living entities...It is possible to intermingle the old and the new, I come from Quebec City, which is a pretty good example of successful hybridisation...you know, the different bands of cultural flow are symbiotic, even though the old city wall was restored, it doesn't segregate people as it does here in San'a'...²⁴

Holly : Umm...How do they decide what to preserve? If a government only has like a *limited* budget, how do they decide how to distribute the funding?...

Trevor : Well this is the perfect arena for power politics...Take the case of the Anatolian city of Istanbul....If you take a walk around its centre, you'll notice a partial preservation of its architecture...and the selection of what is to be conserved and embellished is in no way random - it reflects the politics of ethnic nationalism. You see, the city has a predominant Sunni Muslim Turkish population, but it also hosts Kurdish, Jewish, Greek and Armenian minority communities, but unless they raise their own funds, their houses and monuments are left to crumble...

Michael : So the construction and conservation of certain buildings really can hold a strong political function?

Trevor : Definately, it's one of the ways in which nationalism is generated and reinforced...This is really something you guys should look in to! ...

Boris : Yeah, we will...A lady called Constance said I should talk to Benedict on-line...*initially*, to clarify a few *notions*...

Trevor : Yeah, that's a good idea...He's contributed a lot to the understanding of the personal and cultural feeling of *belonging* to a nation...

Boris : Mmm...I think we'll look at the website at the Airport, cause we have to check in two hours before take off...so we'll have some time to fill...

Trevor : And when is take-off? Do we have time to go for a little wander through San'a'?

Sudipta : Oh, the flight's at seven o'clock..What time is it now? I'd love to see more of this place...I feel...good ...here

Holly : Arrgh!...It's two thirty-five! We'd better get a wiggle on if we want to see the sights! I wish we could stay longer...Why can't we just take it easy, change our flight and...

Boris : I've got a *deadline*, Holly! But I guess there's nothing stopping you from...

Holly : No, mate...I'm your key informant. !..Well, one of them...I can't desert the project now...Lets go on this walk, then!

[Trevor takes them on a tour of San'a', showing them his favourite places and all the main sights . He leads them down narrow back-streets, through a covered flower market until they decide to rest on the benches of a tea-stall, on a quiet street.]

Trevor : When I first came here, and didn't know the city at all, I used to love taking myself off, exploring ...getting *intentionally* lost just to see where I wound up...There is always so much more to discover about a place, however long you stay, you never get bored...

²⁴ Marchand, Trevor [Lecture at SOAS, 12/11/01, *Anthropology and Architecture*

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Holly : Yeah, I'll *definitely* be back! ...Talking of *backs*...*Michael* !..and *Sudipta*, you've been really quiet, is everything ok? You must be feeling a bit stiff after our hike up the minaret, carrying that load up with you...?

Sudipta : Ah! *Beti* ! I feel so achey...completely weighed down, it's so bulky...

Michael : Yes...Mine's really getting in the way...It does *stick out*...It seems pointless here, you know, everything that it represents seems irrelevant...and I can't move about these little streets freely, it's so restricting...

Sudipta : I haven't mopped my floor, or aired the curtains or done the ironing in days...but no-one seems to mind...it doesn't seem to matter, *really* ...

Holly : I told you so! Come on ,you too, Boris! Why don't we all travel light ?!

Boris : Ahh! You're such a hippy, Holly!

Holly : *And* ?

Boris : I told you already! You can't detach me from my shell...it's what makes me *ME* ! Minus it, I'd become a *slug*...that's every snail's worst nightmare, I mean...they haven't *evolved* properly. I'd be singled out by my species...I...

Holly : Doesn't sound any different from the house deal...You're just making excuses cause your scared of changing...I guess you're just not ready yet...

Boris : You're so patronising!

Holly : You're so prejudiced!

Boris : Durrrrrrrrrr!

Holly : Come on...It's ok, you do what you do...But I still think...

Boris : Yes! You've laboured your point!

Holly : Hey! Check this out!

[Boris and Holly turn to look at the others : Trevor and the tea-stall owner are assisting Sudipta and Michael in detaching their houses. After a few minutes of heaving, gravity does her stuff again, and they all fall about in a heap. A cab pulls up.]

Cabdriver : Taxi?! Hospital?! Private?! Government?!

Michael : No! No hospital! Everything's ok! Actually, I've never felt better!

Cabdriver : Ok! Central Mosque? National Museum? Restaurant? Hotel?

Sudipta : No! We're fine! *Fantastic* !

Cabdriver : Ok! You call me when you want Airport, I give you number!

Boris : AIRPORT! Yes! Oh *man* ! What time is it?! Ahhgh! ...Flight! Deadline! Ahhgh!...

Holly : all right, Boris! Keep your hair on!...What little you have!...We're ok, we'll make it...Just start getting in, you know how *long* it takes you!

Boris : Shut up!

Holly : I love you too!...*REALLY* !...

[They say hastened but heartfelt farewells to Trevor and the tea-stall owner, thank them for their various contributions and all four clamber into the airport-bound cab].

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SCENE SEVEN

[After checking in, they locate an internet centre, and all draw chairs around one of the computers. Holly types in the address. The site refers her to the Today's Special chat room; topic proposed : *Architecture, Power and National Identity*²⁵ .]

Michael : Well! That 's pretty nifty!...

Holly : Mmm...Turned out nice, again...I'll do the typing, shall I? First question anyone?

Boris : Erm...Well, tell him who we are and what we're doing...and er...ask him how you get a *national* identity...and what a *nation* is, something like that...

[Holly transcribes Boris' questions, rephrasing a little here and there.]

Benedict : Welcome to the forum!

'All communities larger than the primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined, and they are imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'²⁶. The 'imagination' of a community, the notions of 'communion' and 'fraternity' are facilitated by the colonial legacy of communication, 'census, map, museum'. Nation-building is achieved by geographical and cultural delimitation.

Holly (typing) : But how do they make that felt...How to they transmit the idea of a nation to the people?...

Benedict : Well, one way that governments go about it, which is *Today's Special*. is by expressing the concept of a national identity in concrete form, through architectural constructions...I'll pass you over to my colleague:

Lefebvre: 'Monumentality always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message... Monumental buildings mask the will to power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought'²⁷

Holly (typing for Michael) : So certain architectural constructions exemplify the Nation, like totems...And you used the word 'mask', and 'claim' - does that imply that the message is often false, that it's a deliberate form of lie?...

Clifford : Well, I think that in order to form a national identity, the nation state must seem 'indigenous' and...²⁸

Lawrence : Sorry to interject, but my analysis of Capitol buildings in Papua New Guinea, Kuwait, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh 'suggests a more specific manifestation of this : the need to make selected aspects of the indigenous seem more like the nation-state'²⁹

Boris : Umm...Like in Istanbul...

Holly (typing for Sudipta) : How do governments, ...well, architects, go about representing the nation-state?

Lawrence : Well, there are three approaches to the design of Capitol complexes : as 'beyond politics', as 'a microcosm' and as 'idealisation'...

Holly (typing for yourself) : Which approach do you think is the best?

Lawrence : Well, 'as a concern for microcosmic accuracy, taken to the level of iconography, would tend to deny pluralism and stress the presence of a dominant group', in heterogeneous societies 'idealisation' seems to be a more favourable strategy - as long as it is not manipulated in order to disguise the

²⁵ Title of Lawrence Vale's 1992 book

²⁶ Anderson, Benedict 2000 : 6 Imagined Communities, London, New York : Verso

²⁷ Lefebvre 1991 : 143

²⁸ Geertz, Clifford (I know taken from Vale's book as I have the chapter)

²⁹ Vale, Lawrence J. 1992 : 280 Architecture, Power and National Identity Yale University Press

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inequalities of a society, but employed rather to anticipate a more balanced sharing of power in the future.
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Holly (typing for Boris) : If it is an image of the *future*, then what about the *history*, the *traditional* things, the vernacular architecture and the particular ways in which people construct their buildings...that reveals so much about them...?

Lawrence : Yes, all those things are very important...Contemporary monumental constructions can be the synthesis of the past and the present, with references to the vernacular architecture and culture, as well as any *outside* influences that may have been diffused in the course of history... 'Only if the traditional architecture of a given country's component cultures (cultures that have always been open to outside influence) is abstracted and combined into new hybrids can that architecture, often wonderful in itself, also play an active role in the modern world.'³¹

Airport official (overhead speaker) : **WILL PASSENGERS FOR THE A.A FLIGHT 000 PLEASE MAKE THEIR WAY TO GATE 99, BOARDING IN 5 MINUTES...**

Holly : That's us! (typing) : Thank you very much, Messieurs, you've helped a lot! We've got to fly back to London now! Byyyeeeee!

SCENE EIGHT

[They land in London, Heathrow. When they get into the city centre, out into the street after their tube journey, as the pilot had warned them, they were met by great sheets of windy rain. They decide to seek shelter at Boris' hotel, near Russel Square. They dry off in his room.]

Holly : Shall we go down to the bar, maybe get something to eat a bit later? There might be some nice *hotel decor* to marvel over, a nice aquarium...or a plastic palm tree or two...Anyone fancy it?

Boris : I'll join you in a little while...I just want to file my field notes a bit, they're all mixed up...I won't be long though

[Holly, Sudipta and Michael drink Malibu and Cherry-ade at the bar, reminiscing about their trip to San'a'. After three rounds of the cutting-edge cocktail, Holly expresses concern at Boris' absence.]

Holly : I think I'll go and check that he's ok...he said he'd only be ten or fifteen minutes...

[Holly goes up to Boris' room, only to find that the door is locked, and the room apparently empty.]

Holly (in petto) : Huh! Must've just missed him!

[She makes her way back to the bar. As she is walking along one of the interminable corridors she hears some muffled but obviously distressed sounds coming from behind one of the doors.]

Unidentified-speaker : etmeowttaere !!!!! elp !!!

[Holly puts her ear to the door]

Unidentified-speaker : etmeowttaereimtellyne !!! yukanteetmee !!! imananthropologist inohowoolive !!!
etmeowttaere !!! e!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!lp !

[Alarmed by what she thinks she is hearing, Holly creeps into the room. She finds herself in a big kitchen, hiding behind a stack of giant tins of marmalade, she observes a quite peculiar scene : a man in a chef's uniform, with his back to her, is crouching near a bucket with a plate covering it. He seems to be whispering something to the bucket. At the risk of being noticed, she moves a little closer until she can hear the man's mumbled conversation with whatever is in the pail]

³⁰ Vale, Lawrence J. 1992 *Architecture, Power and National Identity* Yale University Press

³¹ As above

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Chef : Just poo it all out, *mon petit escargot* ! Come on...Just sree days, no food for ioo leettle *gastropod*, but zen... *gastronomie for me* !! Ah! Wis my lovely garleec, and my 'erbs, a little wine, maybe a leettle *pâte feuilletée*...Ah! *Une petite merveille* ! Come on, *petit* ! Just poo it all out, so ioo're nice and clean for Gerard's gourmet snack! Just poo it all out!...

Unidentified-speaker(more intelligible): Hellllllllllllllpppp !!! Getmeoutahere !!!

[At this Holly intervenes.]

Holly : Hey, Mister! What are you doing with that bucket? What have you got in there?

Chef : Eh?! Oo are ioo, ein? You *arant* allow-ed in my kitchen! So go away! Allez! Bye-Bye!

Holly : No *Bye Bye* ! Show me what's in that bucket ! Show me your *prisoner*!

Chef : Allez! Zoo! Pfit- Pfit! Good-bye! Very nice to meet ioo...lalala ! Go away!

Holly : Right! If that's how you want it to be!...

[Holly forces her way passed the Chef and takes the lid off the bucket.]

Holly : BORIS !!!!! Oh my god! *BORIS* !!!! Oh mate! Are you ...

Chef : Take ioo're smelly 'ands off my leettle *escargot*...Do ioo 'ear me, girl ?!! Leave *my* snell !!

[The Chef lurches in their direction as if to grab Boris . Holly rolls a couple of the marmalade tins towards him. The first one hits him in the shins, he falls to the ground and the second tin thuds against his head, giving them a little margin of time.]

Boris : Take it off, Holly!!!! Take off the shell!!!!

Holly : Whaaat?! Why?! *NOW*?!

Boris : Yes! *NOW* !!! Don't you see what he's trying to do? Put me in that stinky bucket, starve me for three days...get me to *poo it all out* so he can have his bite size buffet *à la Boris*...

Holly : Shouldn't we just *leg* it, mate? How's your culinary charm going to be reduced by losing the shell?...

Boris : *SLUGS*... !!! Holly, no self-respecting chef would go near me with a *barge pole* if I was a *SLUG*..

Holly : You mean that you're ready to *detach* yourself from your shell? ...Wow! You're sure, yeah? Not a *spur of the moment* thing? I don't want to be blamed for...

Boris : Course it's *spur of the moment*, Holly!! Well, I mean...I *have* been thinking about on and off since we met ...but it's the whole *slug* thing I can't get my head round....

Holly : I know what you think ...but you're right in that *no* French people would waste their time making fancy sauces for you if they thought you were a slug, I mean they wouldn't eat *slugs*...You'd be free, Boris!

Boris : Yeah, Holly...So do it *NOW* ! Take it *off*...gently! Hurry though, he's coming to...!

[Holly starts the process of liberation, she gently detaches Boris' brown, beige and white patterned shell and puts it in her pocket. The Chef, livid and clenching his jaw, approaches them.]

Chef : *Mon Petit Escargot* ! Where are iou leettle one ?! Whaaat av ioo done wis im, ein?!

Holly : Oh, that snail? You just missed him...

[The chef looks around the room. He spots the *new* Boris.]

Chef : Errrgh! You disgusting girl ! Don't ioo pepple av any *stondarrdz*? Get that *SLERG* owt of my keetchen...As soon as *NOW* !!! *Allez*! Pfit-Pfit! Get owt ! Get owt! Dirty, dirty *SLERG* !!

[Boris and Holly willingly comply and make a hasty exit. The chef follows them out of the kitchen, scanning up and down the long corridor, calling out for his prize escargot .

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Holly and Boris make their way to the bar where Sudipta and Michael are still sitting, sipping *Piña Coladas* in style. The newcomers recount their (mis)adventure. Appropriate sympathy, then praise is expressed...]

Michael : Well! We've all done it now! ...But you see, Sudipta and I have been discussing the reality of not having a house - to avoid the word *home* - in such a rainy, cold place as England...

Sudipta : Yes...No regrets, none at all! But you know, we are alright now, *in the hotel*, but Boris has to go back to his people and write up his fieldnotes...and then where will we go? Where will we shelter?

Michael : Yes...I just think we have to *reassess* things a bit ...

Sudipta : Lots of thinking to do...

Holly : Yeah, you're right of course...Maybe we can get a place to shelter, but in a *different* way...without attaching them to our backs...I don't know...I guess we all have to try different things until we feel we've got it sussed...

Sudipta : Lots of thinking...We'll have to do this on our own, the same thing won't necessarily suit *everyone*... We were going to suggest roller-skating around Portugal, we thought Boris could have a little skateboard, you know? But then we realised we are a little tipsy! That maybe that's not the solution...That we must try and find our own way of doing things

Holly : I don't know, it could be a laugh ! But...I guess it's not what I *really* want...for ever I mean...I don't know what I *really* want...

Boris : Yeah, it's not really had time to sink in yet...but I do feel *light*...It's kinda nice! I have to go back to write up the assignment tomorrow, but let's, err.. all meet up when I come back to submit it ...

Sudipta : Yes, we'll take things from there...Play it by ear!...

[She tweaks everyone's ear affectionately. ...]

Boris, Holly, Michael and Sudipta (in unison) : DEAL!

The end.

All names are fictional, any resemblance to existing institutions is entirely coincidental.

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